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g Author of CORALINE and THE GRAVEYARD BOOK

NEIL GAIMAN &
P. CRAIG RUSSELL

the Dream Hunters

THE SANDMAN

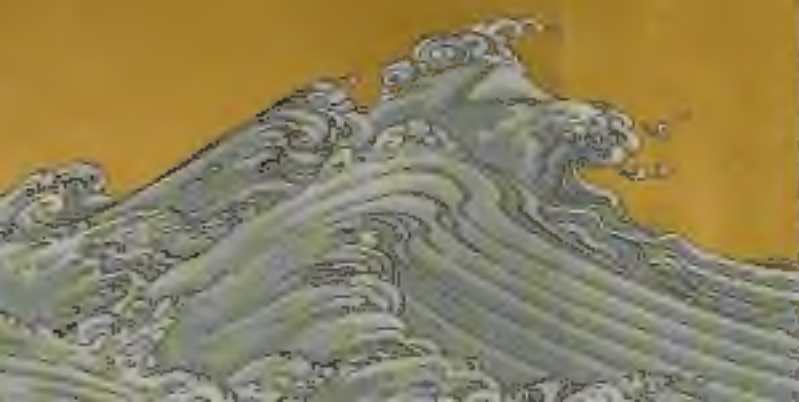
ARTICO



In 1999, acclaimed writer Neil Gaiman celebrated ten years of *THE SANDMAN* by dreaming up a very different take on his signature creation. In collaboration with Japanese artist Yoshitaka Amano, Gaiman penned *THE DREAM HUNTERS*, a story that blended the mythology of *The Dreaming* with that of ancient Japan so seamlessly that readers believed the story was as old and timeless as the events it depicted.

Now, in an act of storytelling alchemy just as impressive, writer-artist P. Craig Russell has transformed Gaiman's luminous prose into a breathtaking comics narrative. The result restores this tale of the King of All Night's Dreaming to the medium of Morpheus's birth—in a union of East and West that still feels as fresh and new as the day it was first dreamed into being...

And so it was that the King of All Night's Dreaming—a being known many years later as the Sandman—would be drawn into a story of love and sacrifice whose lessons even he would not forget...



VA 741 197 Car
Garrison, Ned
The Sandman : the dream
hunters. /



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A surreal illustration of a man in a white shirt carrying a sleeping woman and child through a dreamlike sky. The man is walking on a path of clouds, leaving a trail of red stars. The woman is holding the child, and they are all sleeping. The sky is dark blue with a crescent moon and a green comet. In the bottom left, a red fox sits on a rocky outcrop, looking up at the scene. The title 'THE SANDMAN' is written in a stylized font, and 'The Dream Hunters' is written in a larger, more decorative font.

THE
SANDMAN

The
Dream
Hunters

The Dream



THE
SANDMAN

Hunters

Original words by Neil Gaiman

Graphicplay and art by P. Craig Russell

Coloring by Lovern Kindzierski

Lettering by Todd Klein

Sandman characters created by Gaiman, Kieth and Dringenberg

Le Monogatari translation by Sheldon Drzka

*Adapted by P. Craig Russell from the multi-award-winning illustrated novella
THE SANDMAN: THE DREAM HUNTERS by Neil Gaiman and Yoshitaka Amano*

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Cover by P. Craig Russell | Cover color by Lauren Rindqvist | *The Dream Hunters* logo by Nancy Quinn

THE SANDMAN: THE DREAM HUNTERS

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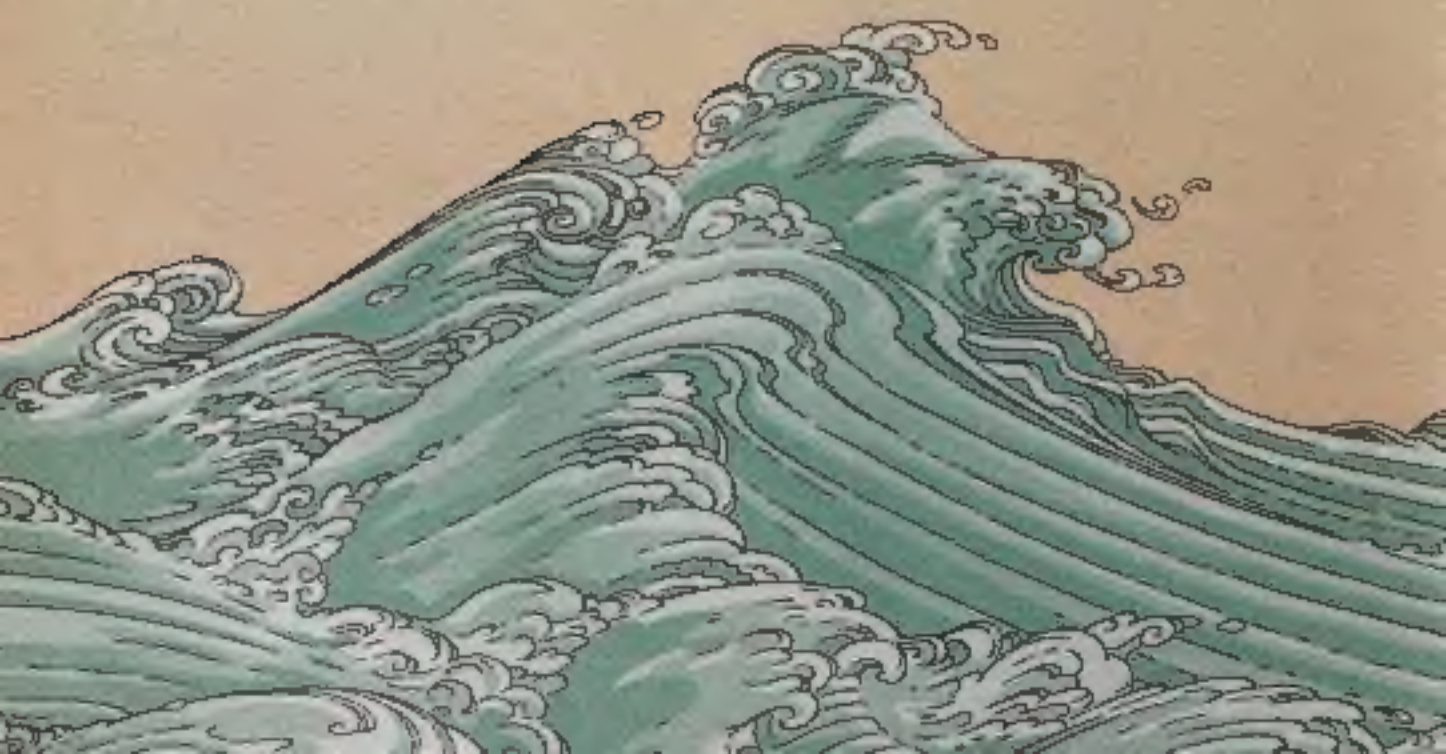
SANDMAN:
The DREAM
HUNTERS



I KNOW NOT WHETHER
YOU CAME TO ME OR I TO YOU.
NOR WHETHER IT WAS
REALITY OR A DREAM,
ASLEEP OR AWAKE.



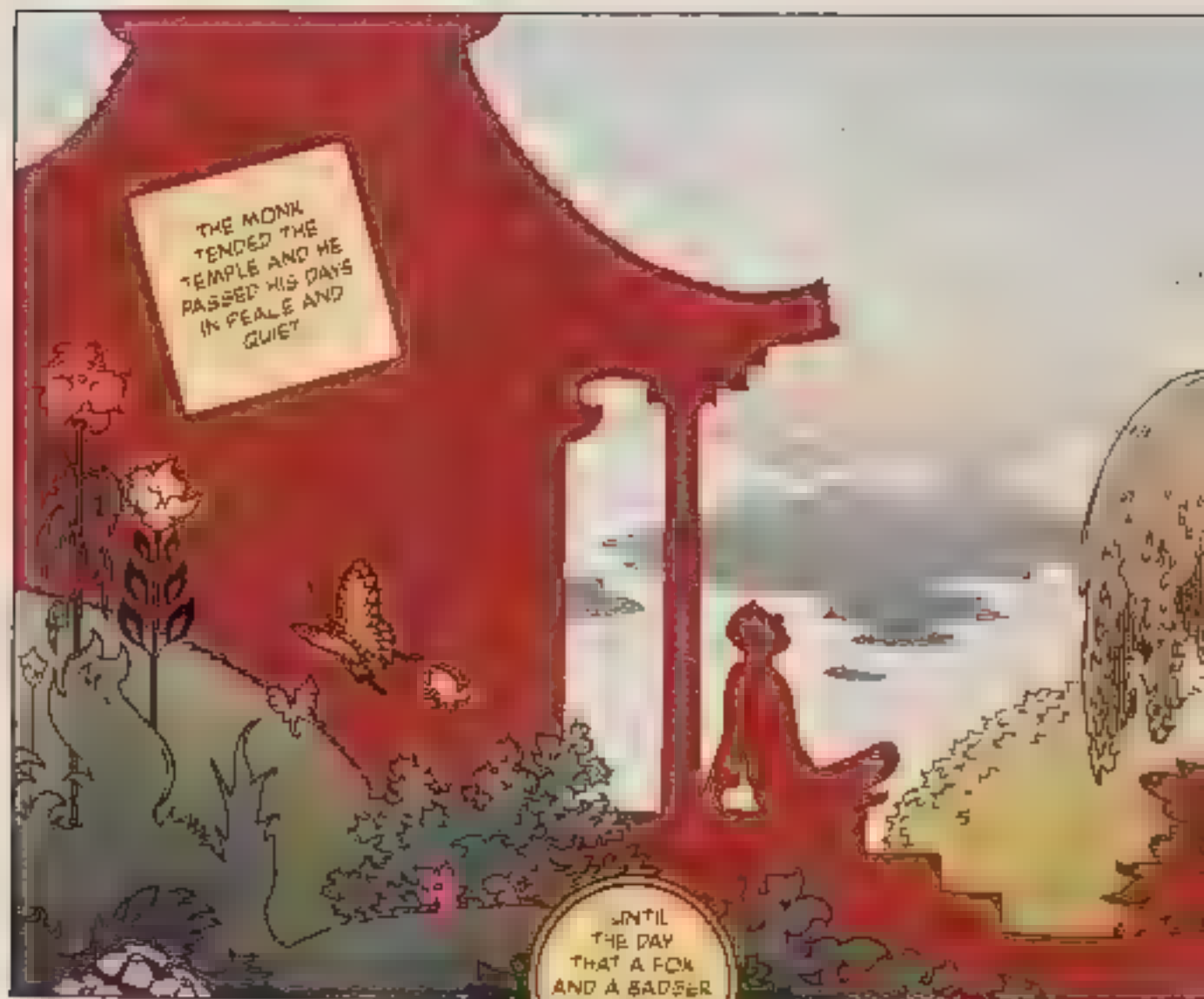
I AM LOST IN THE DARKNESS
OF A DOWNCAST HEART.
DREAM OR REALITY,
LET IT BE DECIDED TONIGHT.



A MONK
LIVED IN
SOLITUDE
BESIDE A
TEMPLE ON
THE SIDE OF
A MOUNTAIN

IT WAS
A SMALL
TEMPLE AND
THE MONK
WAS A
YOUNG MONK
AND THE
MOUNTAIN
WAS NOT
THE MOST
BEAUTIFUL OR
IMPRESSIONING
MOUNTAIN
IN JAPAN





UNTIL
THE DAY
THAT A FOX
AND A BADGER
PASSED THE
TEMPLE



AND SPIED THE MONK HOEING THE LITTLE PLOT OF YAMS THAT FED HIM FOR MUCH OF THE YEAR





LET
US MAKE A
WAGER

WHICHEVER OF US SUCCEEDS IN
DRIVING THAT MAN FROM THE TEMPLE
WILL KEEP THE PLACE AS A HOME



FOR I HAVE BEEN MANY
YEARS SINCE PILGRIMS OR TRAVELERS
CAME TO THIS TEMPLE

AND I WILL
BE A HUNTER PALE
BY FAR OLDER THAN
A BADGER'S DEER OR
A FOX'S DEN

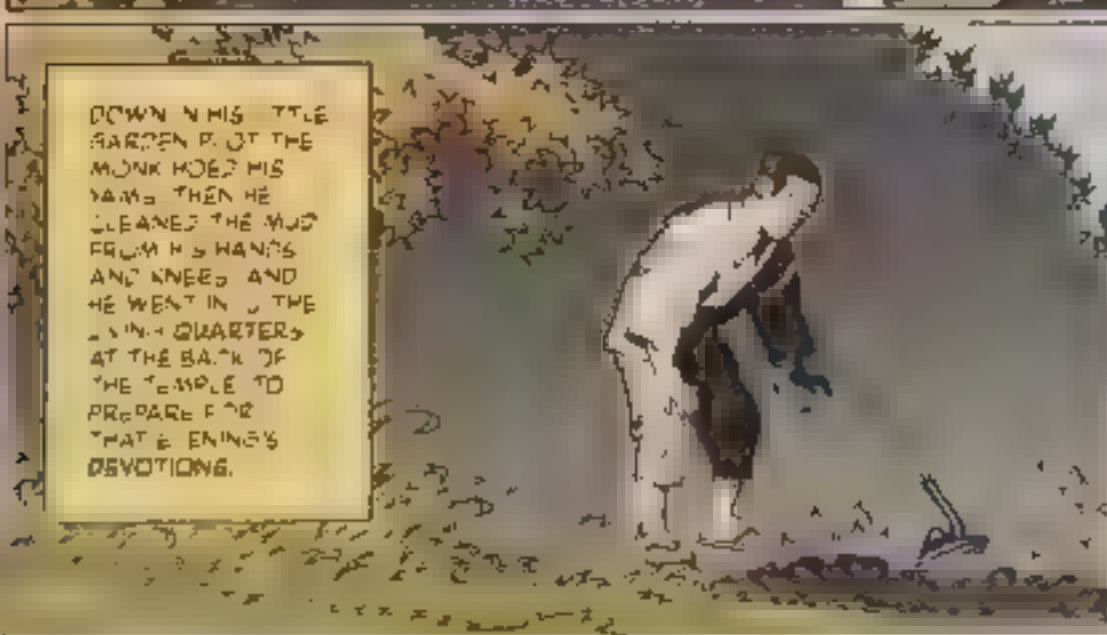


VERY WELL
A WAGER
IT IS



EACH OF US WILL
TAKE IT IN TURNS

I SHALL
GO FIRST



DOWN IN HIS LITTLE
GARDEN. AT THE
MONK MOVED HIS
YAMBO THEN HE
CLEANED THE MUD
FROM HIS HANDS
AND KNEES AND
HE WENT INTO THE
MONK'S QUARTERS
AT THE BACK OF
THE TEMPLE TO
PREPARE FOR
THAT EVENING'S
DEVOTIONS.



THAT
NIGHT

WHO
SERVES IN THE
TEMPLE?

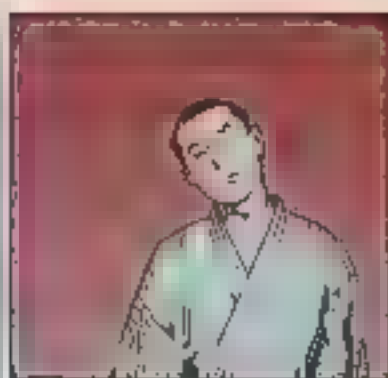
LET HIM
SHOW
HIMSELF!

I
AM THE
UNWORTHY
GUARDIAN
OF THIS
TEMPLE

...BUT
WHO AMONG
US CAN ACCOUNT
FOR THE WILL
OF THE
GODES?

TRULY IT WAS
SAID THAT THOSE WHO
SEEK AFTER FORTUNE FIND
IT AS ELUSIVE AS GRASPING A
RAINBOW, WHILE THOSE WHO
DISDAIN GOOD FORTUNE AND
THE WORLD OFTEN FIND IT
BEATING UPON A GONG
OUTSIDE THEIR
DOOR.

AND A
SKINNY AND
UNIMPRESSIVE
RUNT OF A
PRIEST YOU
ARE



WELL, DO YOU WISH
TO KNOW WHAT YOUR
GOOD FORTUNE
IS?!



CERTAINLY.



KNOW THEN THAT YOU HAVE BEEN SENT FOR
BY NONE OTHER THAN THE EMPEROR HIMSELF. YOU
ARE TO TRAVEL AS FAST AS YOU CAN TO THE IMPERIAL
PALACE, WHERE THE EMPEROR WISHES TO SPEAK WITH
YOU AND TO CONFIRM THAT YOU ARE INDEED THE
PERSON OF WHOM THE AUGURS AND DIVINERS
HAVE TOLD HIM..

...AND YOU WILL
BE RAISED FROM OBSCURITY
AND APPOINTED TO MINISTER
TO THE NEEDS OF THE
IMPERIAL COURT..

...A POSITION
WHICH BRINGS WITH
IT GREAT *FORTUNE*
AND MIGHTY
ESTATES.



HOWEVER, KNOW ALSO THAT IF YOU DO *NOT* PRESENT YOURSELF AT THE IMPERIAL PALACE BEFORE THE NEXT DAY OF THE MONKEY, THEN THE AUGURIES GO FROM GOOD TO VERY *BAD*, AND THE EMPEROR SHALL, REGRETFULLY, BE FORCED TO *ISSUE YOUR DEATH WARRANT*

THEREFORE, WAIT NOT A SINGLE MOMENT, BUT *DEPART* THIS PLACE BEFORE DAWN OR RISK THE EMPEROR'S SEVEREST DISPLEASURE.



I SHALL LEAVE INSTANTLY



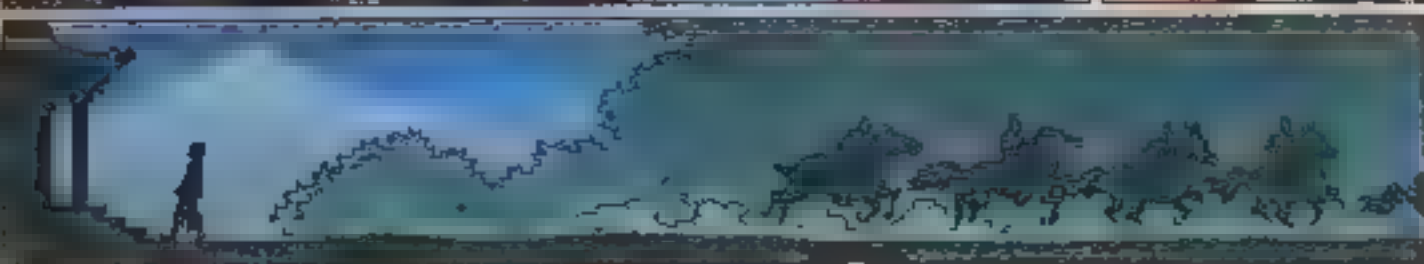
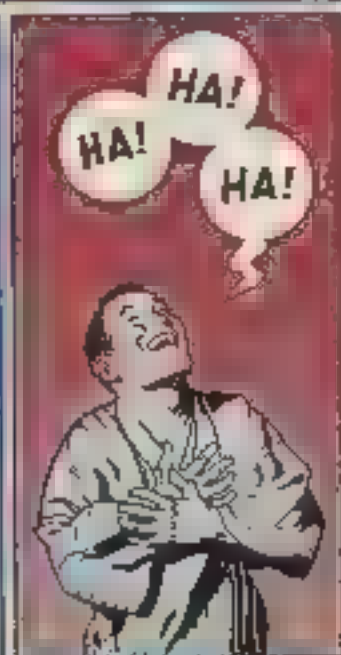
BUT BEFORE I LEAVE, I HAVE ONE QUESTION TO ASK



AND WHAT WOULD THAT BE?



WHY THE EMPEROR
WOULD SEND A BADGER TO
TELL ME TO COME TO THE
IMPERIAL COURT



THE CLOUDS COVERED THE MOUNTAINTOP BEFORE MIDDAY THE NEXT DAY. SO IT CAME AS NO SURPRISE WHEN RAIN BEGAN TO FALL. THE MONK WHO WAS USED TO THE WEATHER ON THE SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN, REMAINED AT HIS DEVOTIONS AND DID NOT STIR.

NOT EVEN WHEN THE LIGHTNING STARTS.

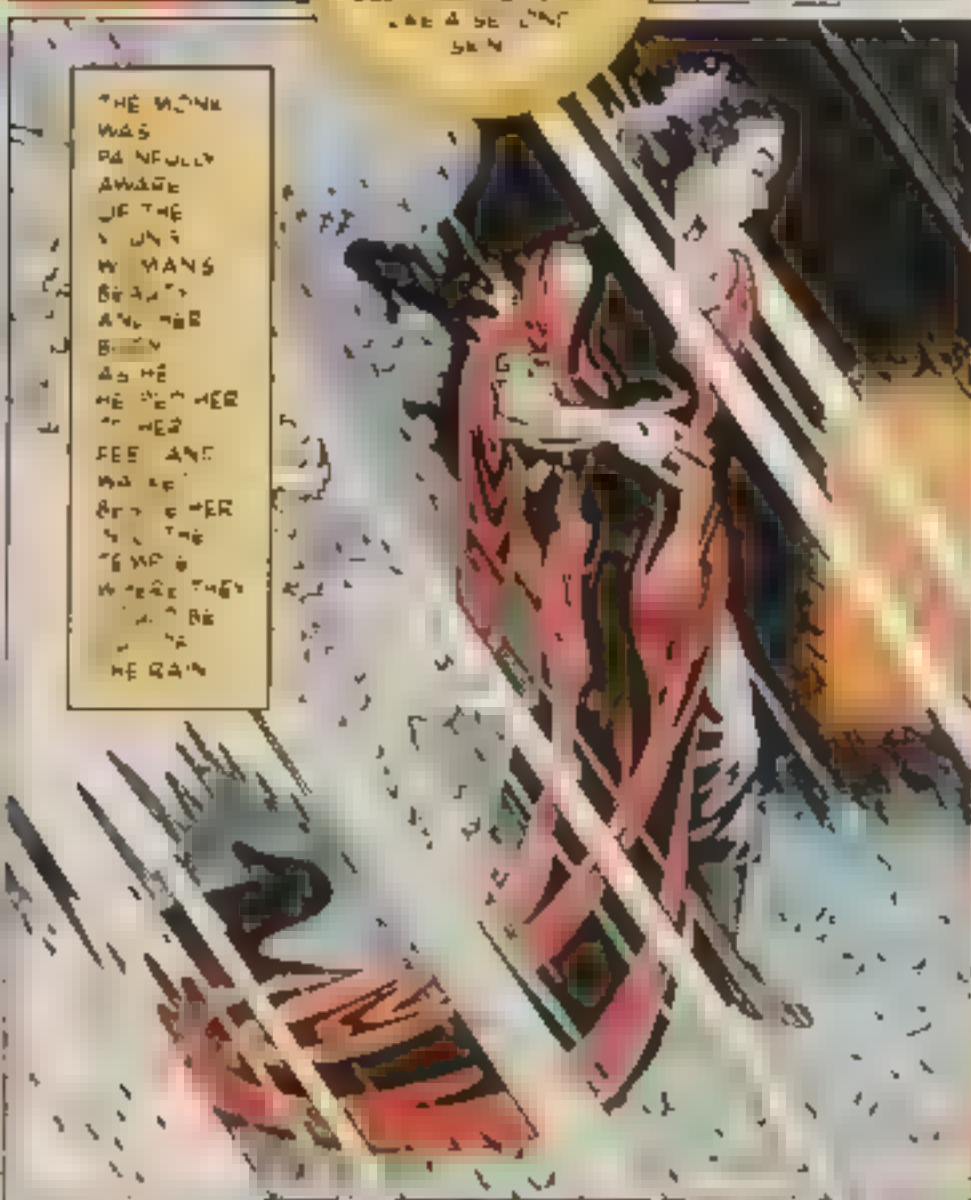
A BLINDING WHITENESS FOLLOWED BY THUNDER SO LOUD AND DEEP IT FELT AS IF IT WERE BEING WRENCHED FROM THE VERY HEART OF THE MOUNTAIN.

SUCH THAT THE MONK COULD SCARCELY HEAR THE SOUND OF WEeping OVER THE POUNDING AND RATTling OF THE RAIn.

BUT HE DID HEAR A SOBBING



SPRAWLED
UPON THE GROUND
WAS A YOUNG
WOMAN HER EYES
WERE
OF THE SAME
COLOR AS HER
HAIR AND
SKIN




THE MONK
WAS
FULLY
AWARE
OF THE
YOUNG
WOMAN'S
BEAUTY
AND HER
BODY
AS HE
HEARD HER
FEET AND
SAW HER
BUT HE
KNEW
WHERE THEY
WERE
HEARD
HERE

AND THE YOUNG
OF THE YOUNG OF THE
PRINCE OF THE YOUNG
AND THE YOUNG OF THE
YOUNG OF THE YOUNG
THE YOUNG OF THE
WE WERE A YOUNG
BROTHER



AND
THE







I OVERHEARD THAT WHEN THE RAIN LETS UP THEY ARE GOING TO RIDE UP THE MOUNTAINSIDE TO THIS TEMPLE AND BURN IT TO THE GROUND AND KILL ANYONE THEY FIND HERE

THEREFORE, LET US FLEE THIS PLACE NEVER TO RETURN, BEFORE THE BANDITS COME. FOR IF WE STAY HERE WE SHALL PERISH.


AND IF WE ARE SEPARATED, YOU SHOULD MAKE YOUR WAY TO THE PROVINCE OF YAMASHIRO, AND ASK FOR MY FATHER, WHO IS THE GOVERNOR AND HAS THE FINEST HOUSE IN THE PROVINCE AND HE WILL REWARD YOU MIGHTILY.



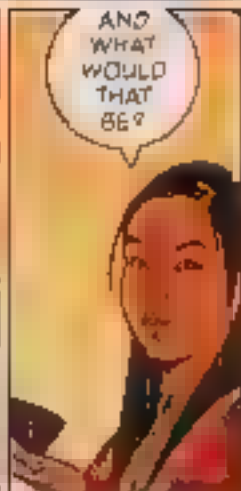
THANK YOU FOR THE RICE IT WAS VERY GOOD



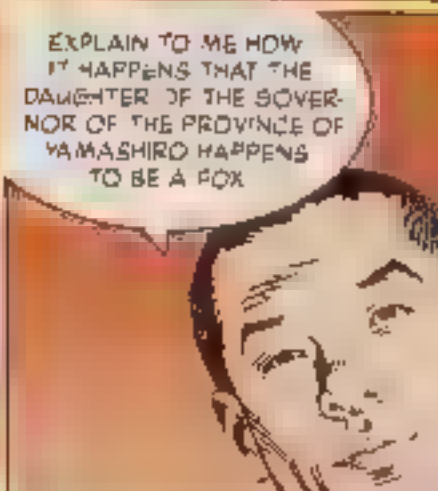
ALTHOUGH THE RICE WAS PERHAPS A LITTLE DRY



WE MUST CERTAINLY LEAVE IMMEDIATELY IF YOU WILL EXPLAIN ONE THING TO ME FIRST



AND WHAT WOULD THAT BE?



EXPLAIN TO ME HOW IT HAPPENS THAT THE DAUGHTER OF THE GOVERNOR OF THE PROVINCE OF YAMASHIRO HAPPENS TO BE A FOX

FOR
I HAVE
NEVER
SEEN EYES
LIKE YOURS
ON A
HUMAN
FACE

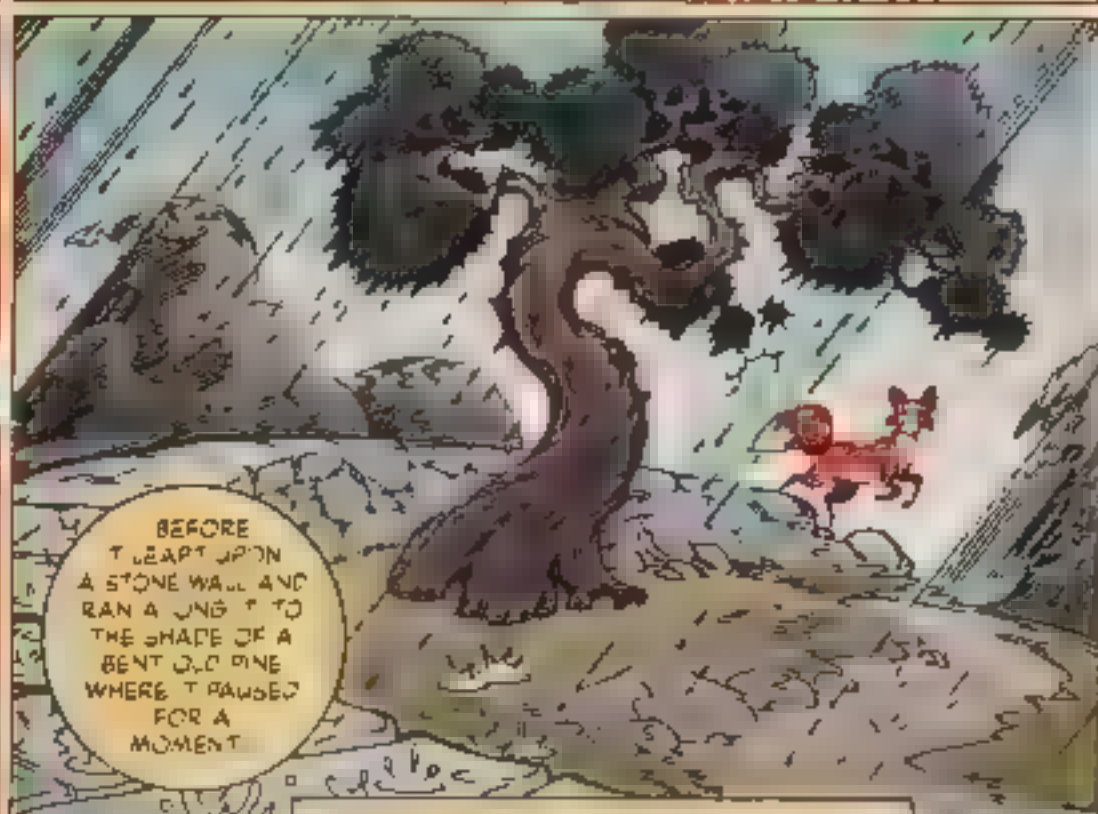
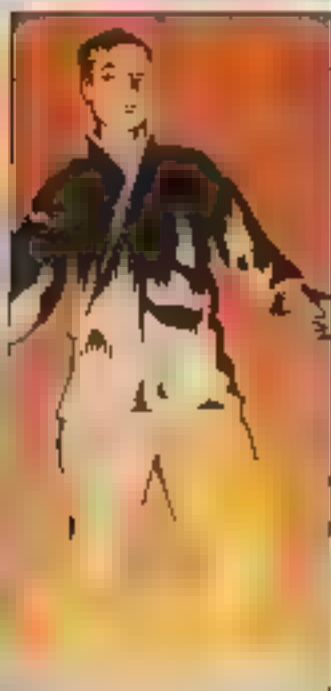


AND NO QUICKER
THAN IT TAKES TO
TELL THE GIRL
JUMPED OVER
THE BRAZIER
AND WHEN SHE
LANDED SHE
WAS NO
LONGER A
GIRL

BUT A FOX

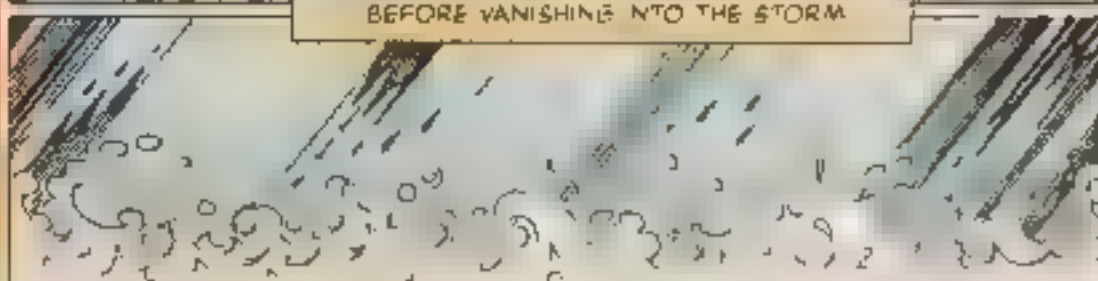


T DARTED THE MONK A
LOOK OF UTTER DISDAIN



BEFORE
T LEAPT UPON
A STONE WALL AND
RAN A JUNG T TO
THE SHADE OF A
BENT OLD PINE
WHERE T PAUSED
FOR A
MOMENT

BEFORE VANISHING INTO THE STORM




LATER THAT
AFTERNOON THE
SUN AME "U" AND
THE MONK WAS ABLE
TO WALK AROUND THE
TEMPLE PICKING UP BLOWN
LEAVES AND FALLEN
BRANCHES AND
REPAIRING THE
DAMAGE OF THE
STORM

HE WAS BEGINNING TO PERCEIVE A PATTERN HERE

SO HE WAS NOT ENTIRELY
SURPRISED WHEN SEVEN
NIGHTS LATER

A TRIO
OF DEVILS
SHAMBLED
THROUGH THE
WILDS
SURROUNDING
THE TEMPLE





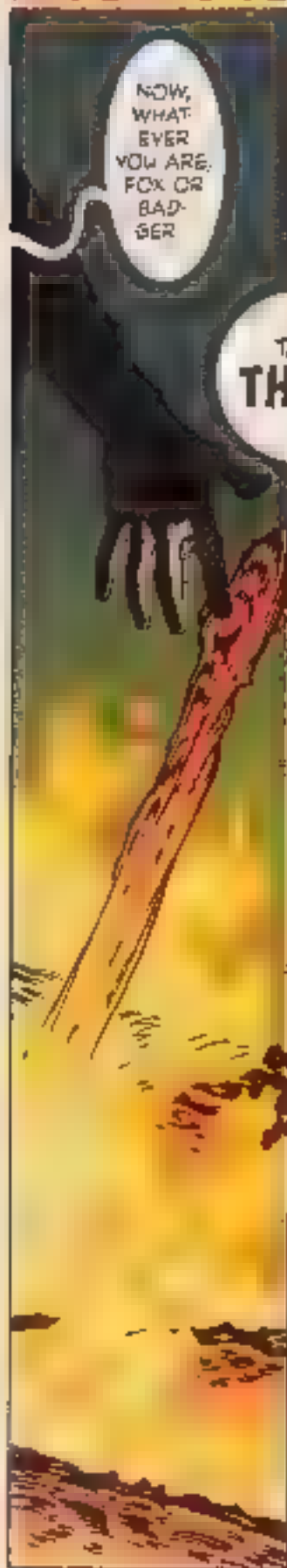
THEN WE
SHALL COME EVERY
NIGHT AT SUNDOWN
AND MAKE A TUMULT
UNTIL, FINALLY, OUR PATIENCE
AT AN END, WE SHALL BURN
DOWN YOUR LITTLE TEMPLE
AND WE SHALL PLUCK YOUR
CHARRED BODY FROM THE
ASHES, AND CHOMP IT
DOWN EAGERLY WITH
OUR SHARP
TEETH!

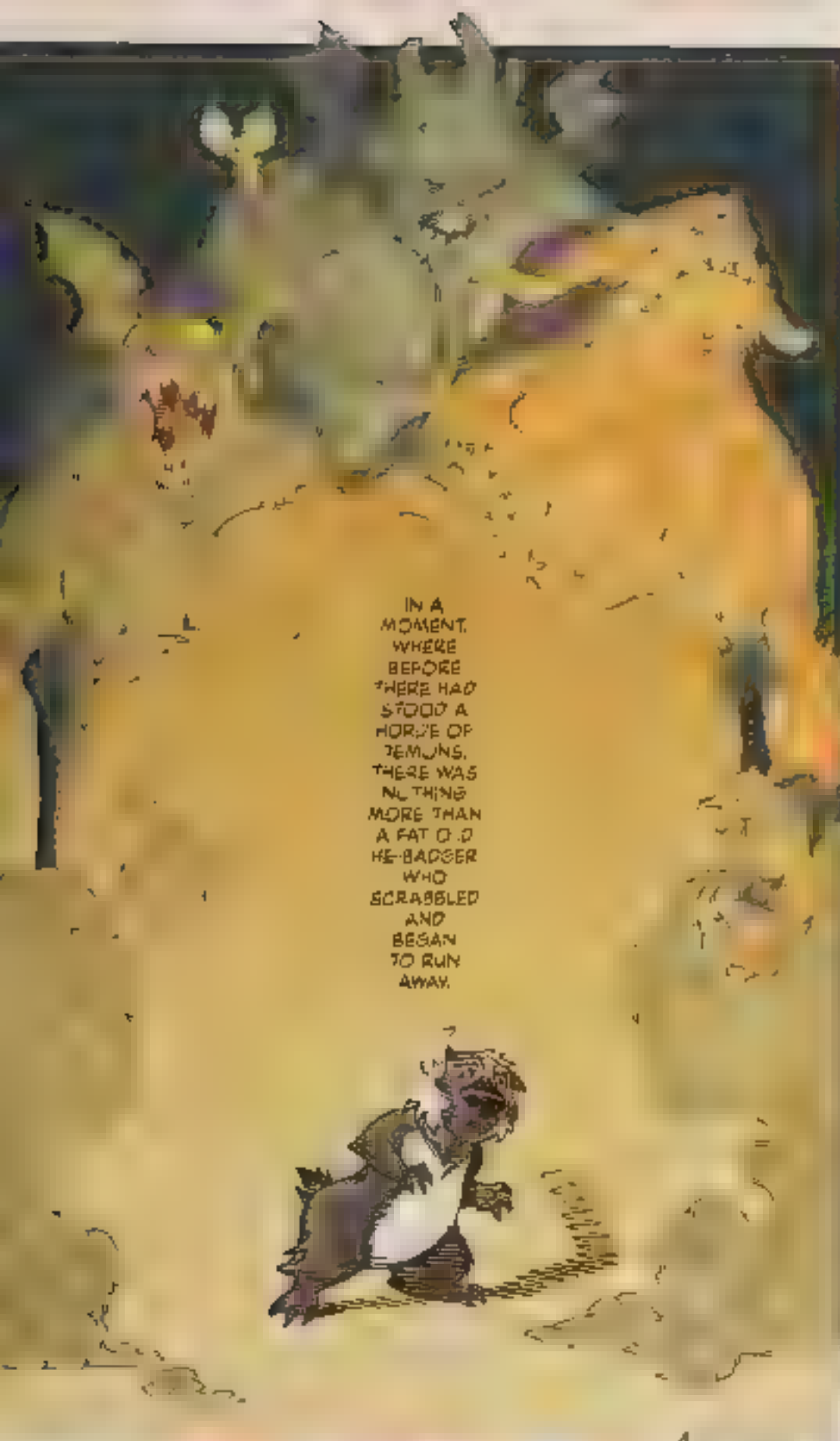
AND
IF
DO
NOT
COME
OUT?

SO
FLEE
!!!

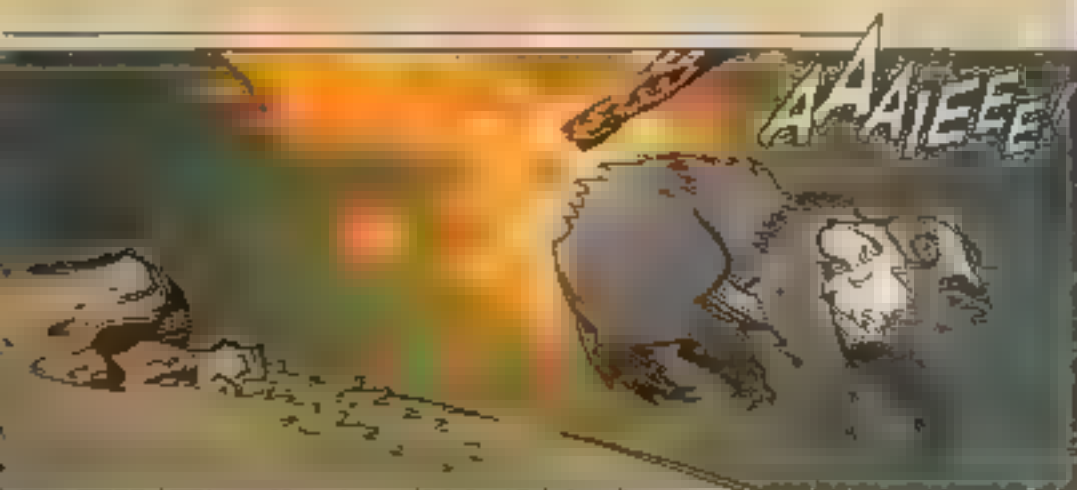
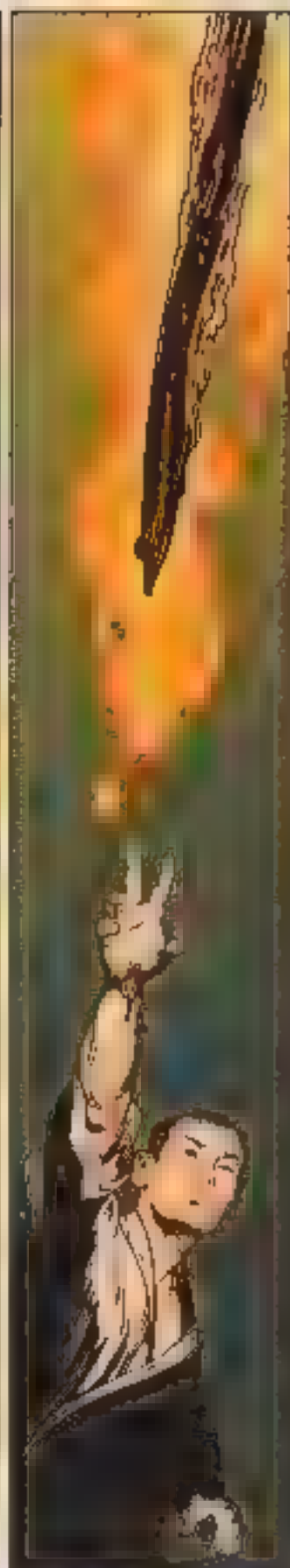
FLEEE
THIS
PLACE!

BUT
THE
MONK
DID
NOT
FLEE





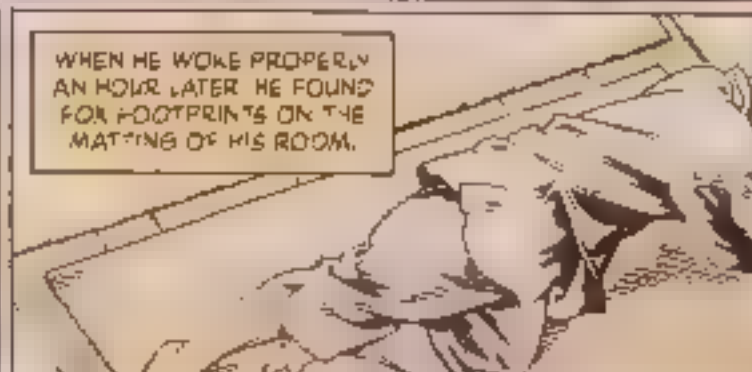
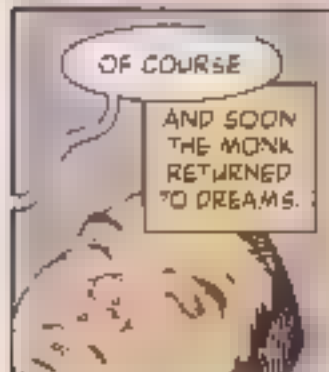
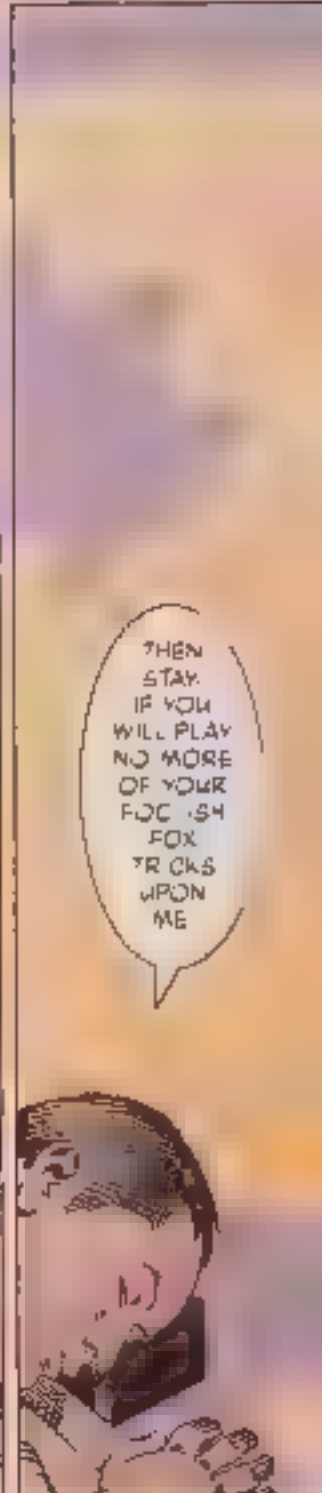
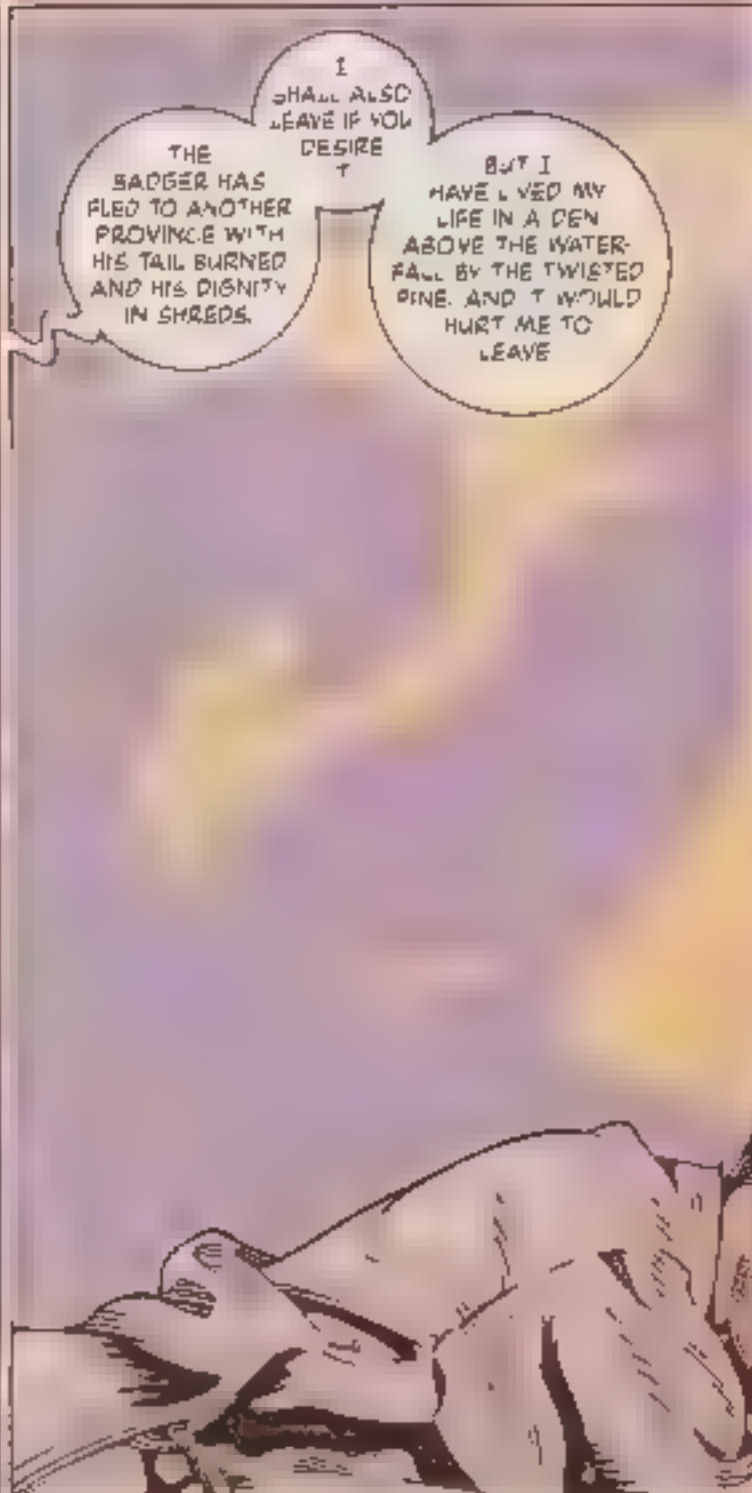
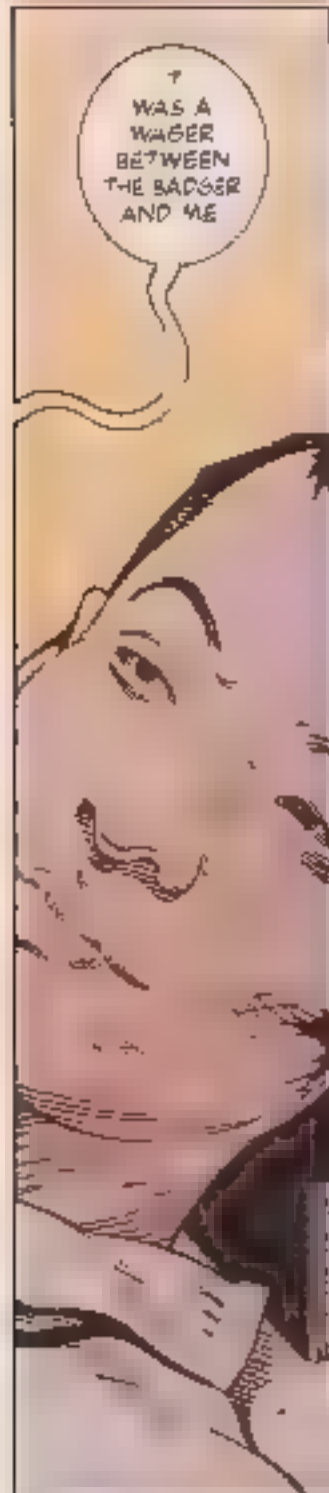
IN A
MOMENT,
WHERE
BEFORE
THERE HAD
STOOD A
HORDE OF
DEMONS,
THERE WAS
NOTHING
MORE THAN
A FAT OLD
HE-BADGER
WHO
SCRABBLED
AND
BEGAN
TO RUN
AWAY.



AAAIEEEEE

THE BADGER
HOWLED WITH PAIN
AND VANISHED INTO
THE NIGHT





THE MONK CAUGHT
SIGHT OF THE FOX
FROM TIME TO
TIME



AND THE SIGHT
OF HER ALWAYS
MADE HIM SMILE



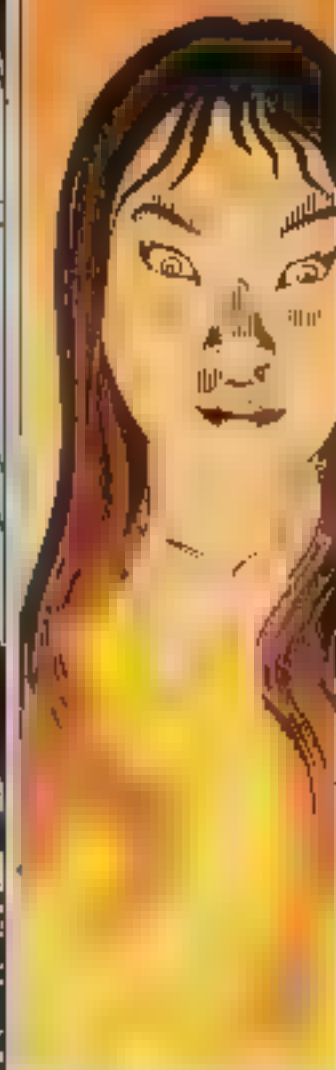
HE DID NOT
KNOW THAT THE
FOX HAD FALLEN
VIOLENTLY IN
LOVE WITH HIM
WHEN SHE CAME
TO TELL HIM
SHE WAS
SORRY.



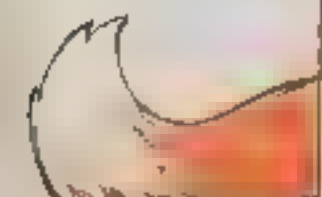
OR
PERHAPS BEFORE
WHEN HE HAD PICKED
HER UP FROM THE
MUDDY COURTYARD
AND TAKEN HER
INSIDE TO DRY
HERSELF BY
THE FIRE



BUT WHENEVER IT
HAPPENED, IT WAS
UNQUESTIONABLY
TRUE THAT THE
FOX WAS IN LOVE
WITH THE YOUNG
MONK



AND THAT WAS TO BE
THE CAUSE OF MUCH
MISERY IN THE TIME
TO COME

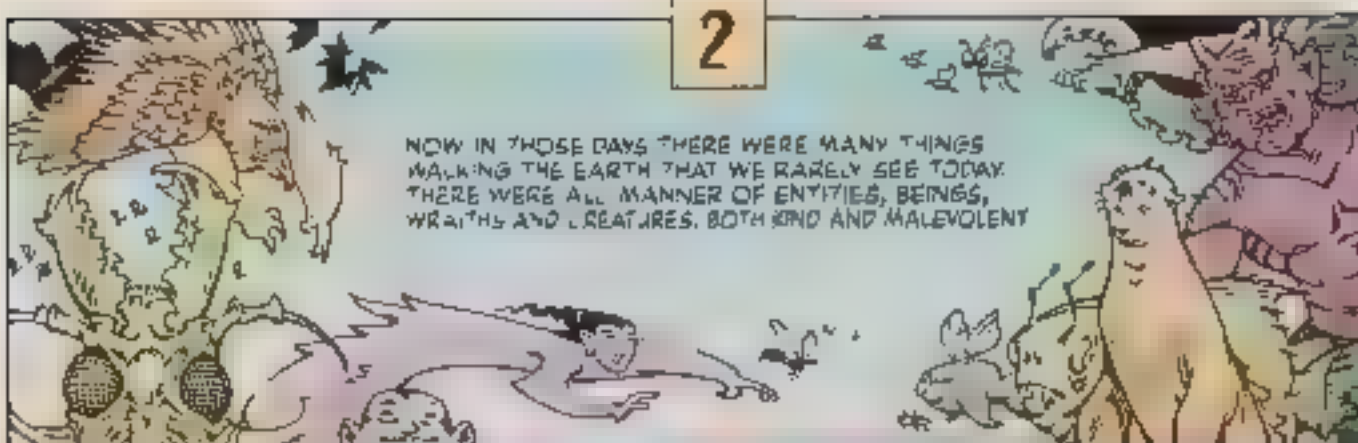


MUCH
MISERY AND
HEAR BREAK

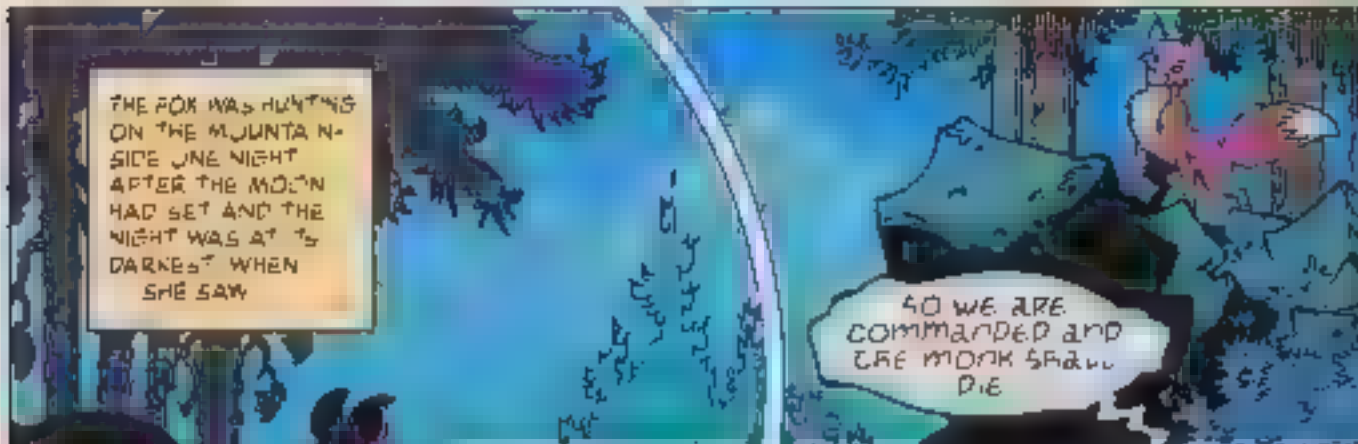


AND OF A STRANGE
JOURNEY





NOW IN THOSE DAYS THERE WERE MANY THINGS
WALKING THE EARTH THAT WE RARELY SEE TODAY.
THERE WERE ALL MANNER OF ENTITIES, BEINGS,
WRAITHS AND CREATURES, BOTH KIND AND MALEVOLENT



THE FOX WAS HUNTING
ON THE MOUNTAIN-SIDE ONE NIGHT
AFTER THE MOON
HAD SET AND THE
NIGHT WAS AT ITS
DARKEST WHEN
SHE SAW

SO WE ARE
COMMANDED AND
THE MONK SHALL
DIE

aye!

OUR MASTER
WHO IS A YIN YANG
MASTER OF GREAT
POWER HAS SEEN
THAT COME THE NEXT
FULL MOON, EITHER
SHE OR THE MONK
SHALL BE
DEAD

AND IF
IT IS NOT
THE MONK
THEN I MUST
BE OUR
MASTER

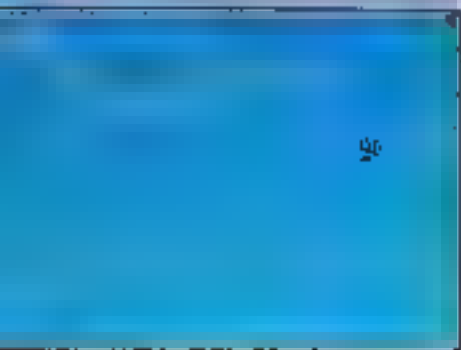
HOW THEN
SHALL HE
DIE?

HUSH!

IS THERE ANY
THING WISERING
TO OUR COUNT UP
FOR I FEEL EYES
UPON ME

THE FOX
HELD HER
BREATH,
AND PUSHED
HER BELLY
DOWN INTO
THE EARTH.

THERE
IS NOTHING
HERE BUT
A DEAD
FOX



THIS IS WHAT
OUR MASTER INTENDS
FOR THREE NIGHTS
RUNNING, THE MONK
SHALL HAVE EVIL
DREAMS

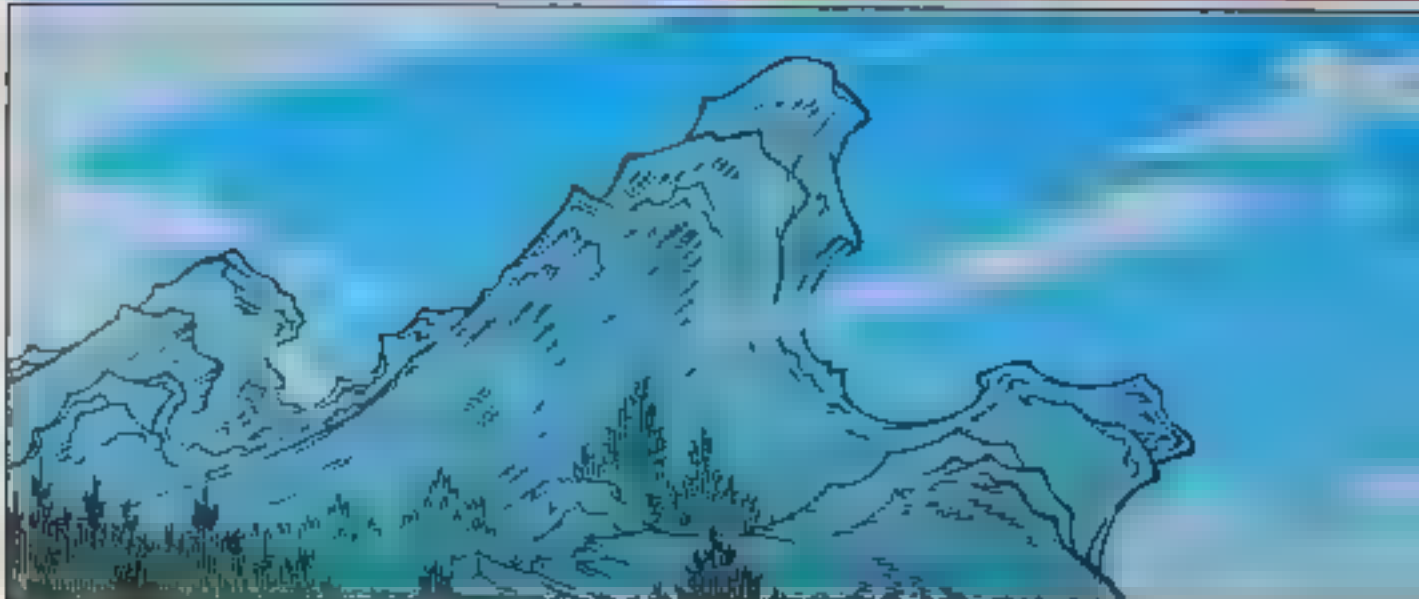
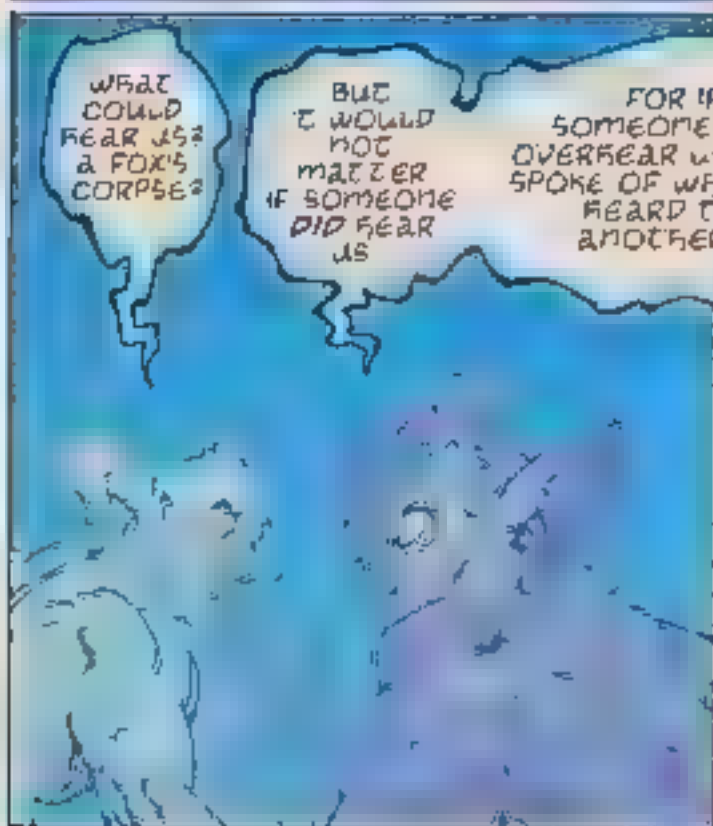
ON THE
FIRST NIGHT
THE MONK
SHALL DREAM
OF A BOX

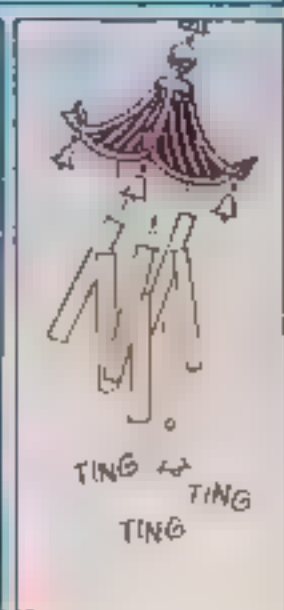
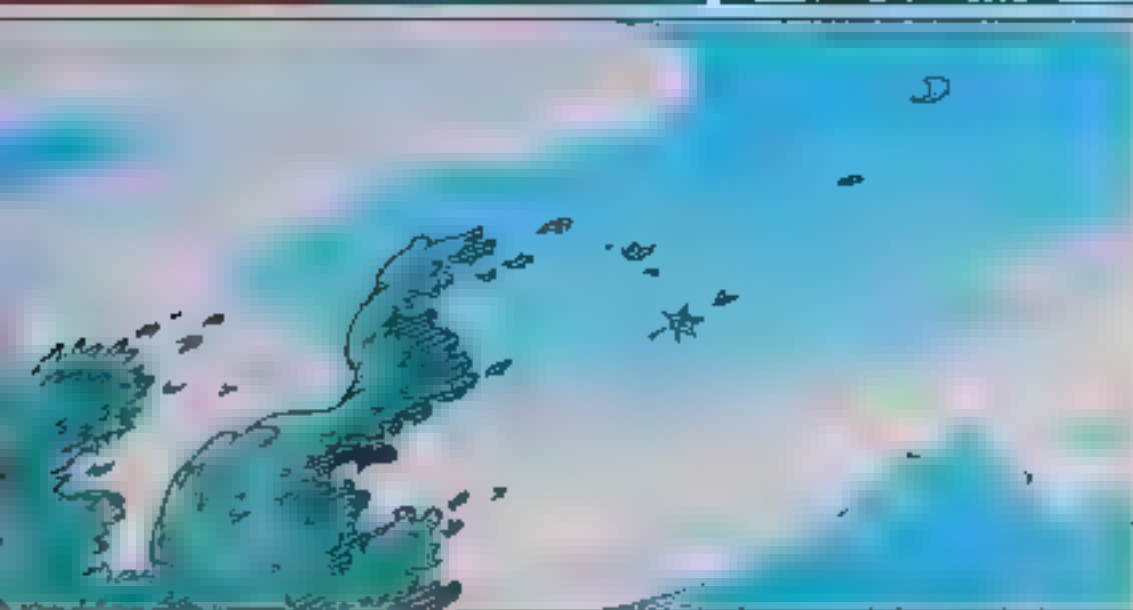
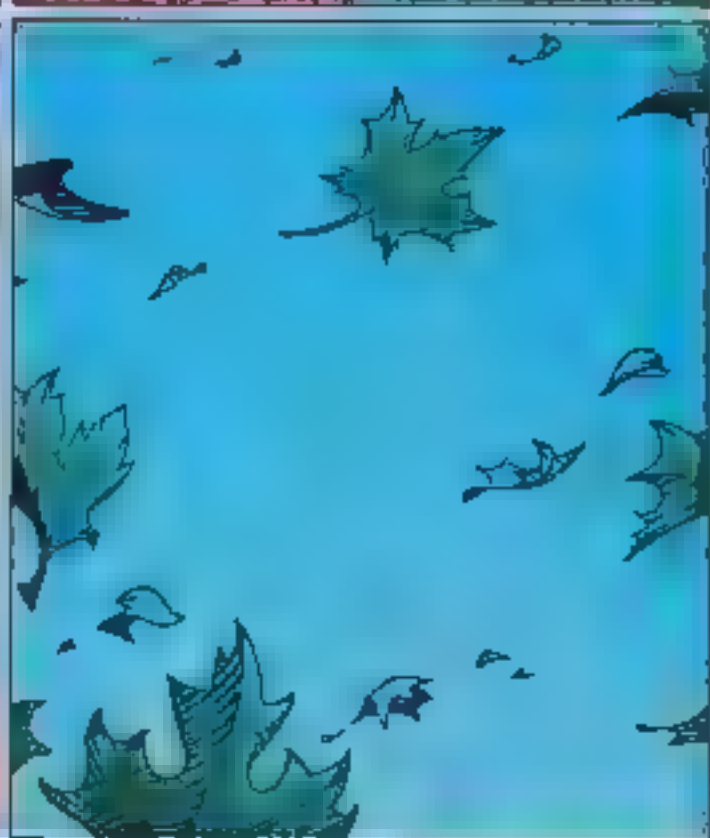
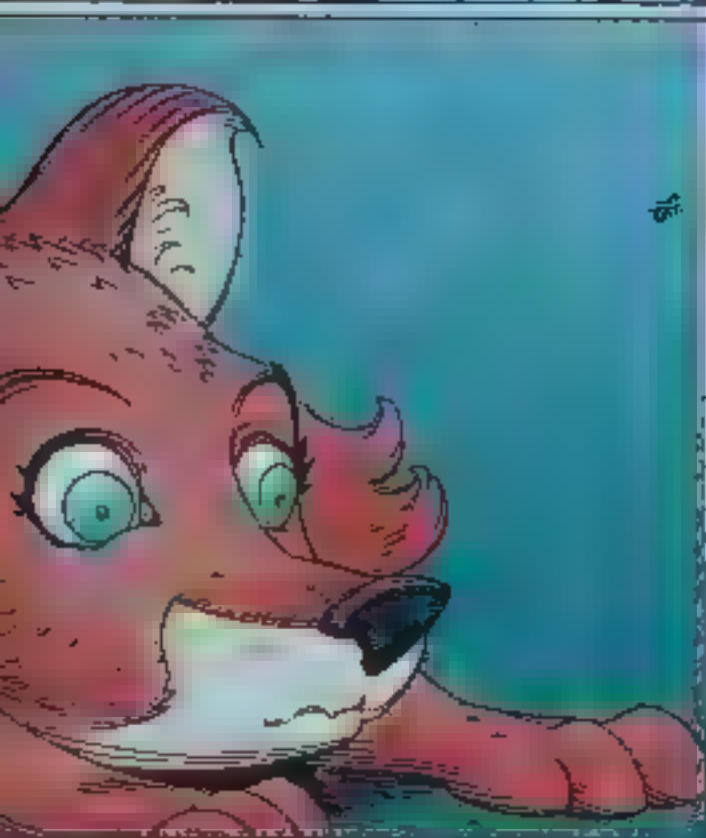
ON THE
SECOND NIGHT
HE SHALL DREAM
OF A BLACK
KEY

ON THE
THIRD NIGHT
HE SHALL DREAM
THAT HE UNLOCKS
THE BOX WITH
THE KEY

WHEN, IN HIS DREAM,
HE OPENS THE BOX HE
SHALL LOSE ALL CON-
NECTION TO THIS WORLD,
AND WITHOUT FOOD
AND WITHOUT WATER
HE WILL DIE SOON
ENOUGH

IF HIS DEATH WILL NOT BE
SAVED TO OUR MASTER'S
CONSCIENCE



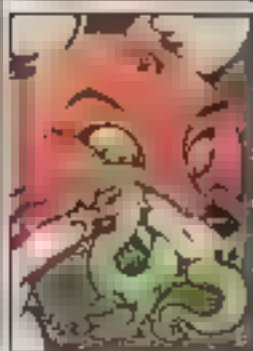


SHE LAY
THERE
STIFF AS
A FALLEN
BRANCH
UNTIL
THE SUN
WAS HIGH
IN THE
SKY THEN
SHE MADE
HER WAY
DOWN
THE SIDE
OF THE
MOUNTAIN
UNTIL SHE
REACHED
HER DEN

IN THE BACK OF THE FOX'S DEN WAS HER MOST PRECIOUS THING. SHE
HAD FOUND IT SEVERAL YEARS BEFORE TANGLED IN THE ROOTS OF A
GREAT TREE SO SHE HAD DIG AND CHEWED UNTIL SHE HAD IT OUT OF
THE GROUND, AND THEN SHE HAD LICKED IT CLEAN WITH HER OWN
TONGUE, AND SHE HAD TAKEN IT BACK TO HER OWN DEN, WHERE SHE
VENERATED IT AND CARED FOR IT

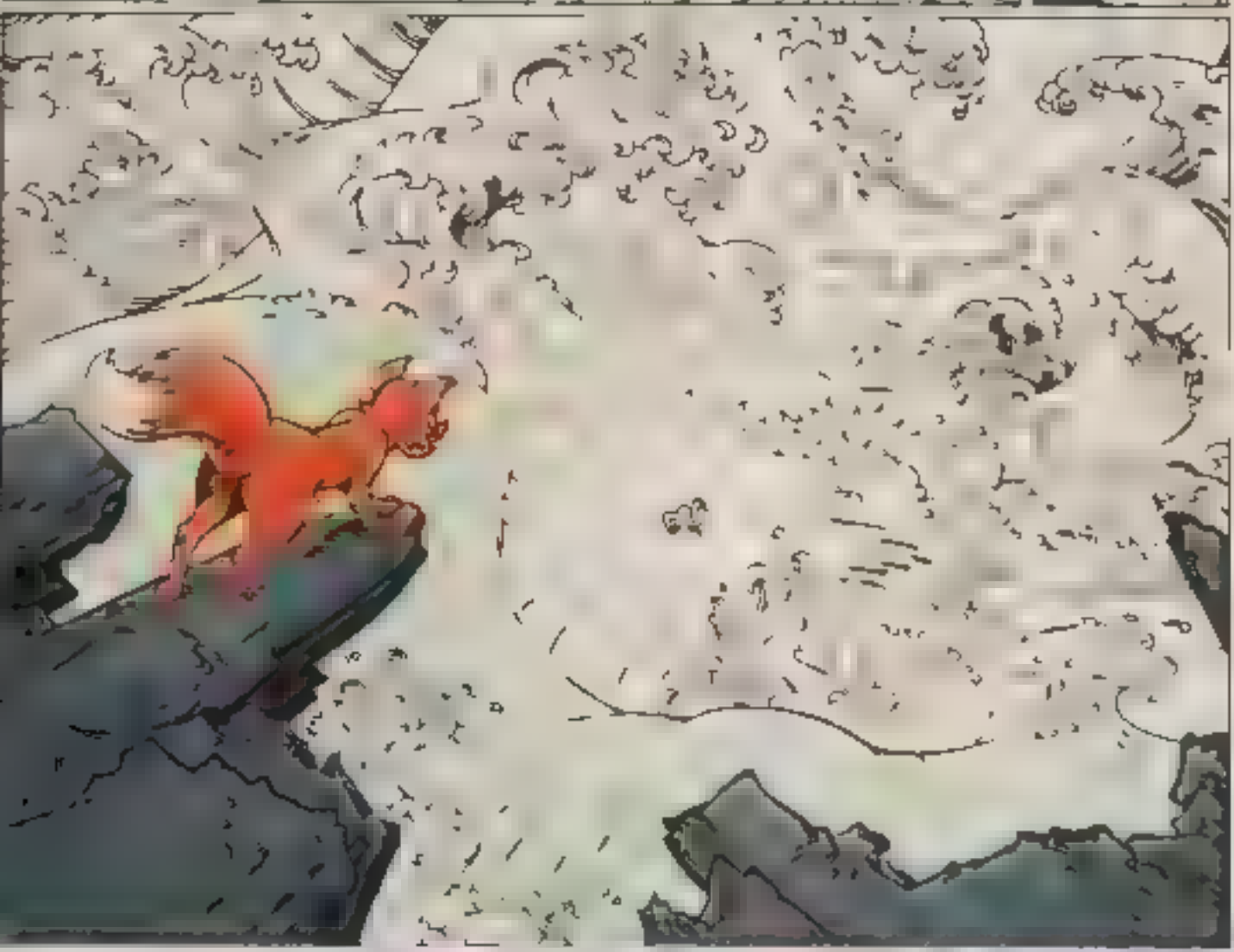
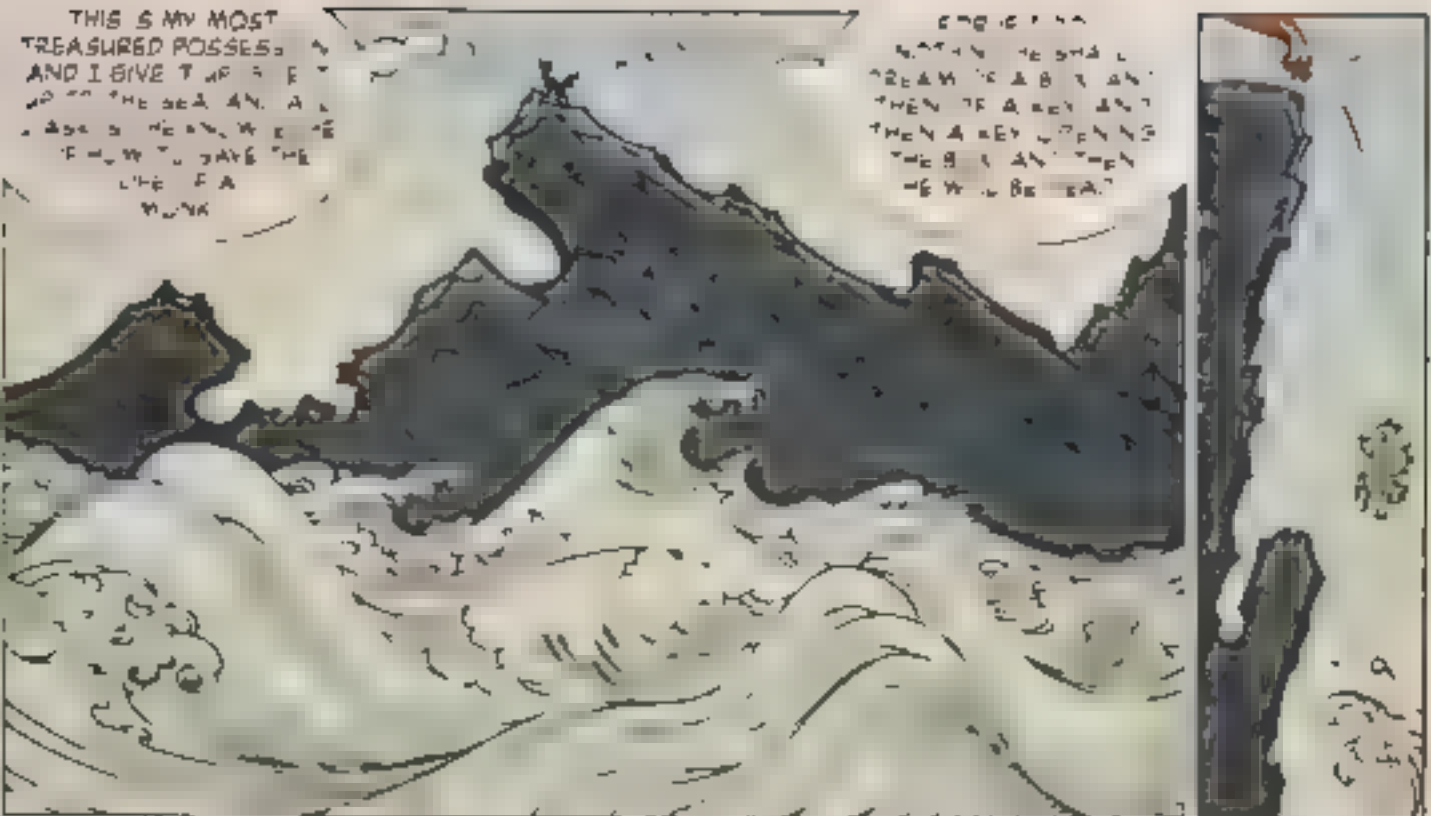
IT
WAS HER
TREASURE

IT WAS A CARVING OF A
DRAGON CARVED FROM JADE
AND ITS EYES WERE TINY RED
STONES THE DRAGON BROUGHT
HER COMFORT IN THE GLOOM
OF HER DEN ITS RUBY EYES
GLARED CASTING A WARM
RADIANCE



THIS IS MY MOST
TREASURED POSSESS-
ION AND I GIVE IT UP
FOR THE SEA AND A
LIFE IN THE SEA. WE
WILL LIVE THE FA-
MILY

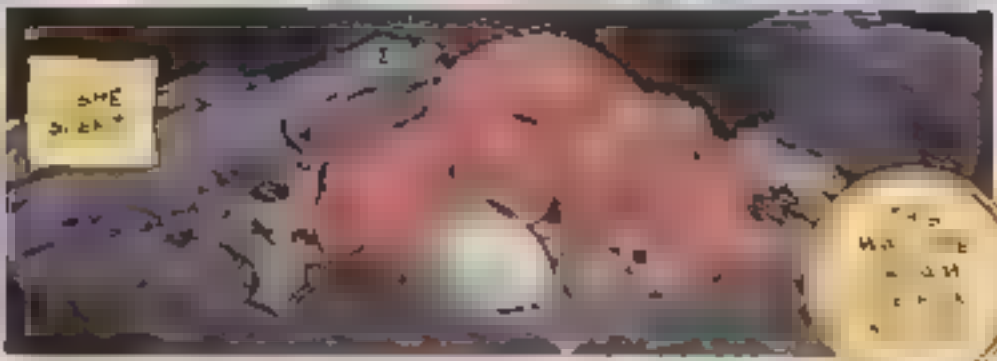
THEY CAN
LIVE IN THE SEA
AND I CAN LIVE
IN THE SEA AND
THEY CAN LIVE
IN THE SEA AND
THEY CAN LIVE
IN THE SEA

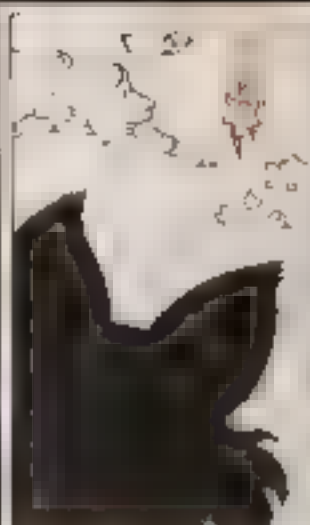


THEN SHE WALKED THE MILES
BACK TO HER DEN AND TIRED
BEYOND ALL IMAGINING

SHE
DIED

THE
END





MY
DRAGON,
WAS T
YOURS,
LORD?

No, but it was
lost long ago by one
whom I called friend.
Back before the true
dragons left this place
to swim in the sky. Now
the sea shall wash it back
to him, and he will sleep
more peacefully at
the bottom of the
great deeps until
the next age of
the world.

I AM
HONORED
AND GRATEFUL
TO HAVE BEEN
PERMITTED
TO BE OF
SERVICE
TO YOUR
FRIEND.

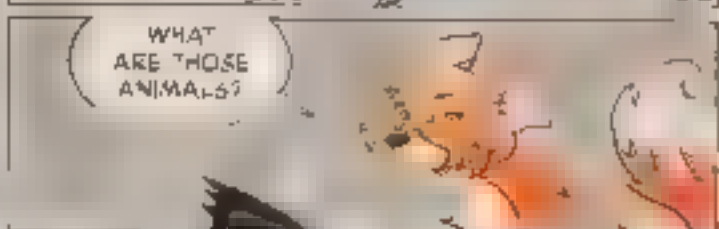


THEY STOOD THERE IN SILENCE. OR SOME TIMELESS
MOMENT IN THE DREAM-PLACE THE TINY FOX AND
THE GREAT BLACK FOX.

THE LITTLE FOX LOOKED ABOUT THE ROCKY WASTE



WHAT
ARE THOSE
ANIMALS?

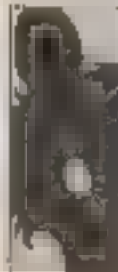
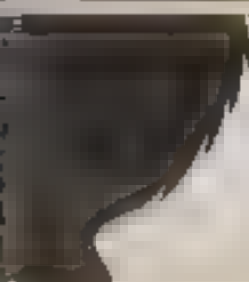


They
are
Baku.

They
are the dream-
eaters.



AND IF ONE WERE TO
CATCH A BAKU AFTER IT HAD
CONSUMED A DREAM.
WHAT THEN?





Baku are hard to catch and harder to hold. They are elusive and crafty beasts.



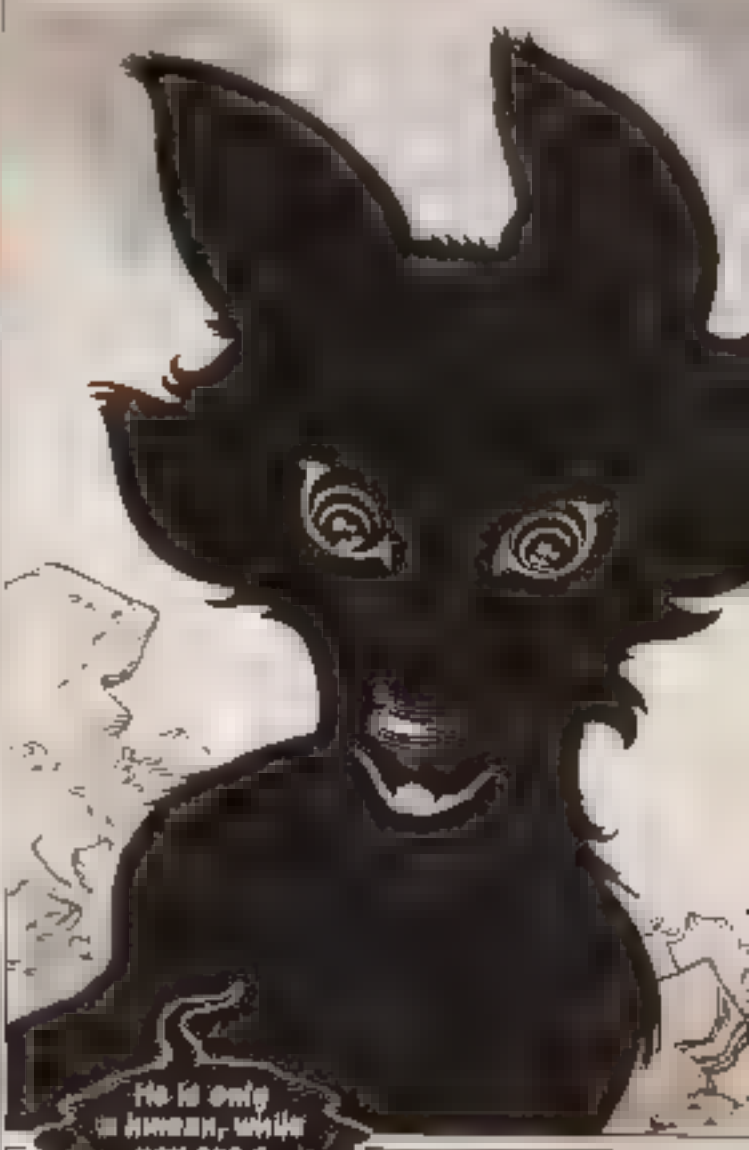
I AM A FOX



I AM ALSO A CRAFTY BEAST

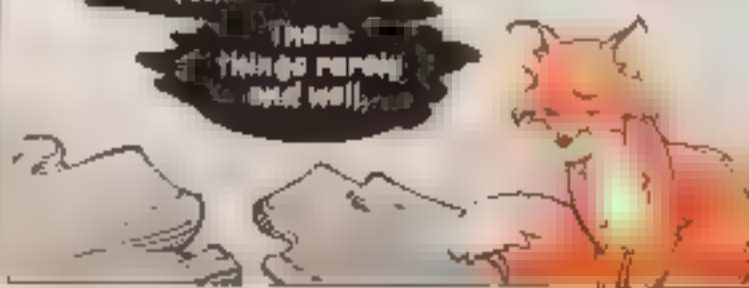


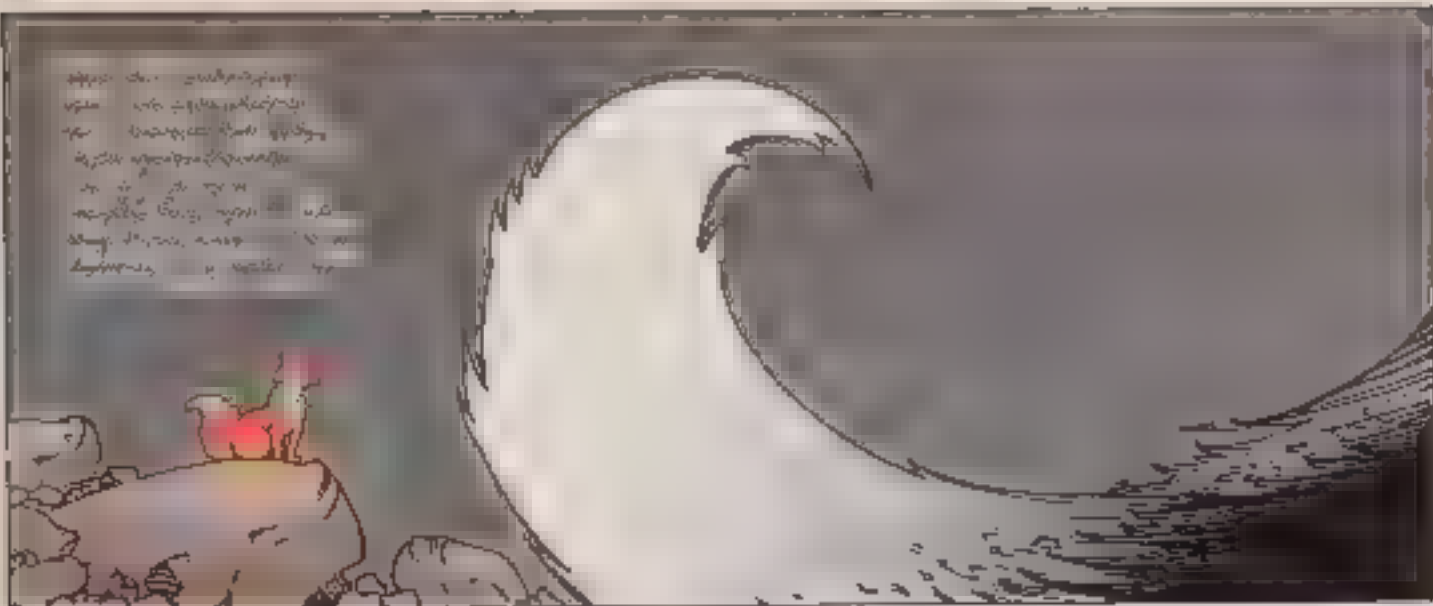
THE GREAT FOX NODDED ASSENT THEN HE LOOKED DOWN AT HER. AND IT SEEMED TO THE FOX THAT HE COULD SEE EVERYTHING SHE WAS. EVERYTHING SHE DREAMED. AND HOPE. AND FEAR



He is only a human, while you are a fox.

Those things rarely and well.





AND IT SEEMED TO THE FOX THAT HE GREW AND GREW,
UNTIL HE WAS THE SIZE OF THE SKY, AND THE HUGE FOX
WAS THE NIGHT, AND THE WHITE TIP OF HIS TAIL WAS
THE HALF-MOON, SHINING IN THE NIGHT SKY.

I
CAN BE
CRAFTY.

AND
I CAN BE
BRAVE

AND
I WOULD
DIE FOR
HIM



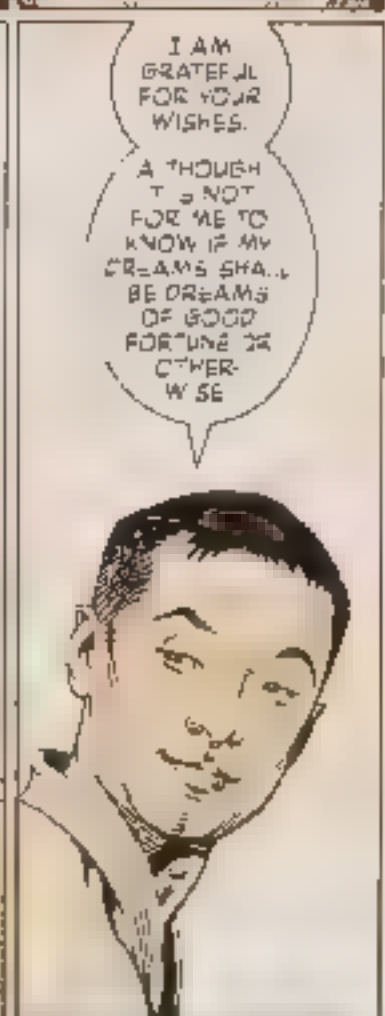
AND THE FOX
IMAGINED THAT
A VOICE IN HER
HEAD WAS SAY-
ING, A MOST
TENDERLY

Then catch his
dreams, child



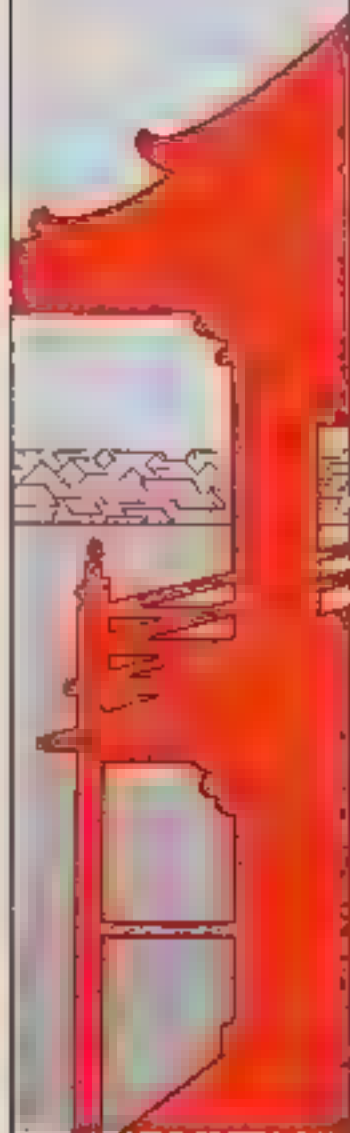
AND SHE AWAKE



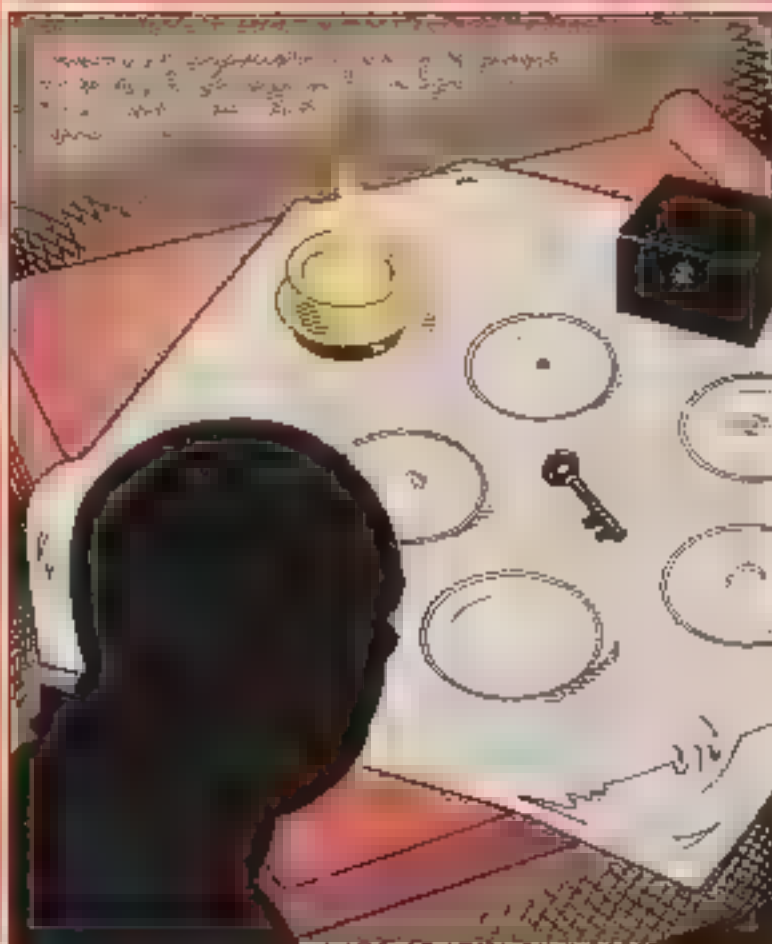


3

FAR TO THE SOUTH
AND THE WEST IN
HIS HOUSE IN KYOTO.



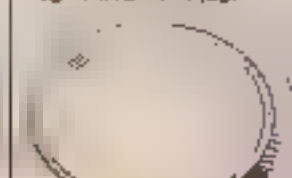
THE MASTER OF YIN-
WANG, THE ONMYOJI,
BURNED A LAMP AT A
SMALL TABLE UPON
WHICH HE HAD PLACED
A SQUARE OF PAINTED
SILK AND UPON IT A
LACQUER CHEST AND A
BLACK WOODEN KEY.



UPON ONE OF
WHICH WAS A
BEAD OF LIQUID.



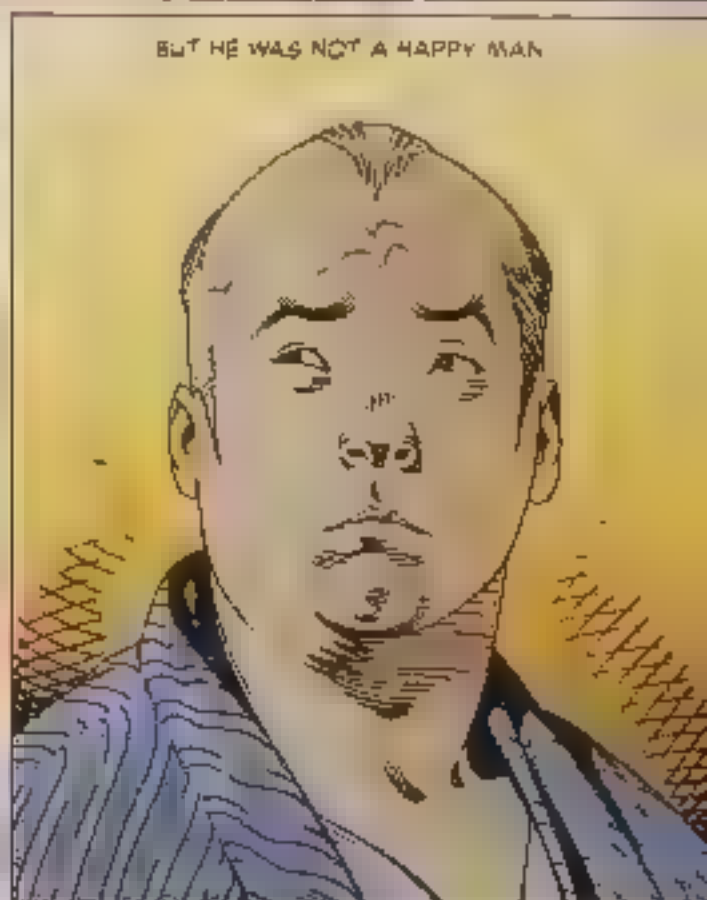
AND UPON THE LAST
PLATE THERE WAS
NOTHING AT ALL.



THE
ONMYOJI
WAS A RICH
MAN A HIGH
OFFICIAL IN THE
BOARD OF DIVINATION.
AND MANY SOUGHT
HIS ADVICE AND
FAVORS.



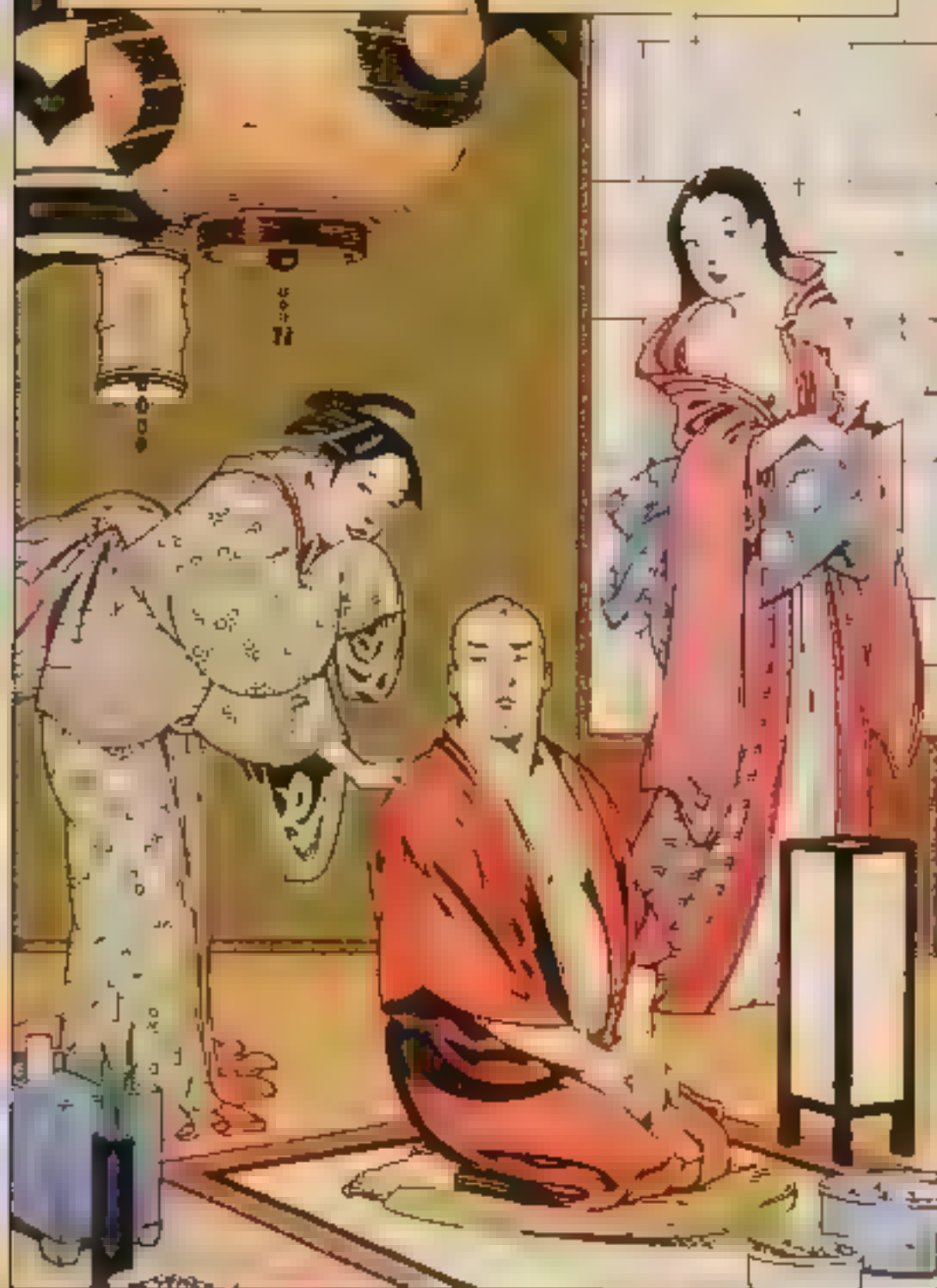
BUT HE WAS NOT A HAPPY MAN



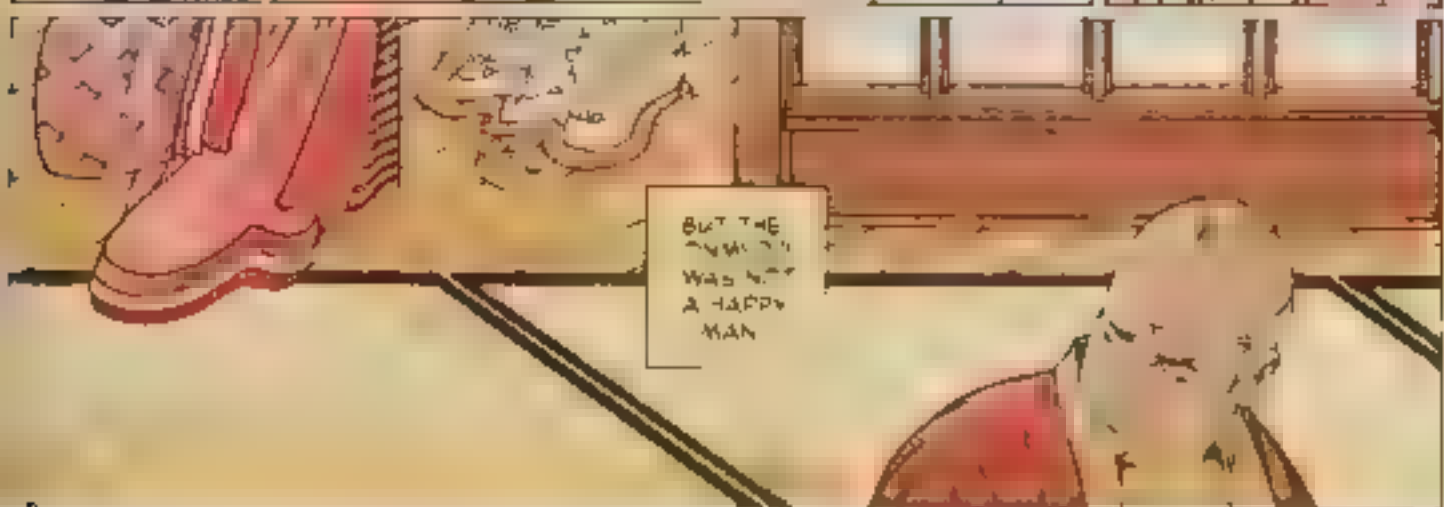
HE HAD A WIFE WHO LIVED IN THE
NORTHERN WIND OF THE HOUSE
WHO RAN HIS HOUSEHOLD AS
BUSY AND EFFICIENT AND WHO
TREATED HIM IN EVERY WAY A
WIFE SHOULD TREAT A HUSBAND

HE HAD A CONCUBINE WHO WAS
BARELY SEVEN EEN AND WHO
HAD HER BEAD FOR HER SKIN
AS FAIR AS THE palest PLUM
BLOSSOM AND HER EYES WERE
DARK AS PLUMS

HIS WIFE AND CONCUBINE
LIVED TOGETHER UNDER
THE SAME ROOF



AND THEY DID
NOT QUARREL

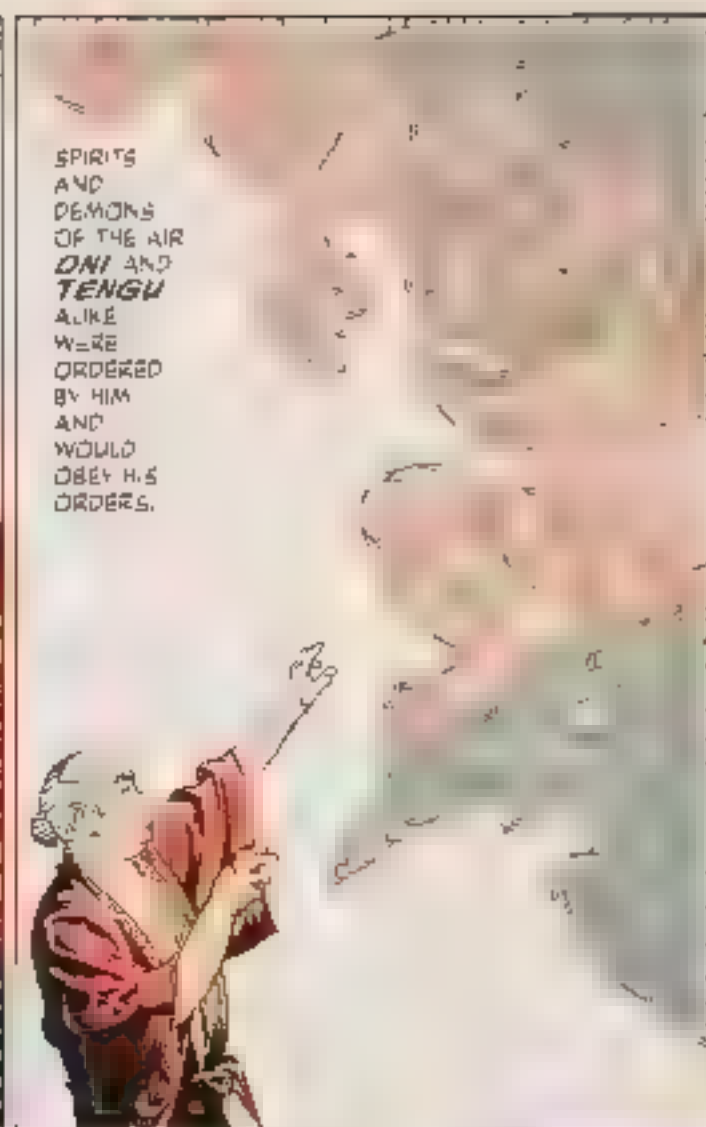


BUT THE
MAN
WAS NOT
A HAPPY
MAN

HE LIVED IN WHAT WAS
WIDELY SAID TO BE THE
SEVENTEENTH-FINEST
HOUSE IN KYOTO



SPIRITS
AND
DEMONS
OF THE AIR
ONI AND
TENGU
ALIKE
WERE
ORDERED
BY HIM
AND
WOULD
OBEY HIS
ORDERS.



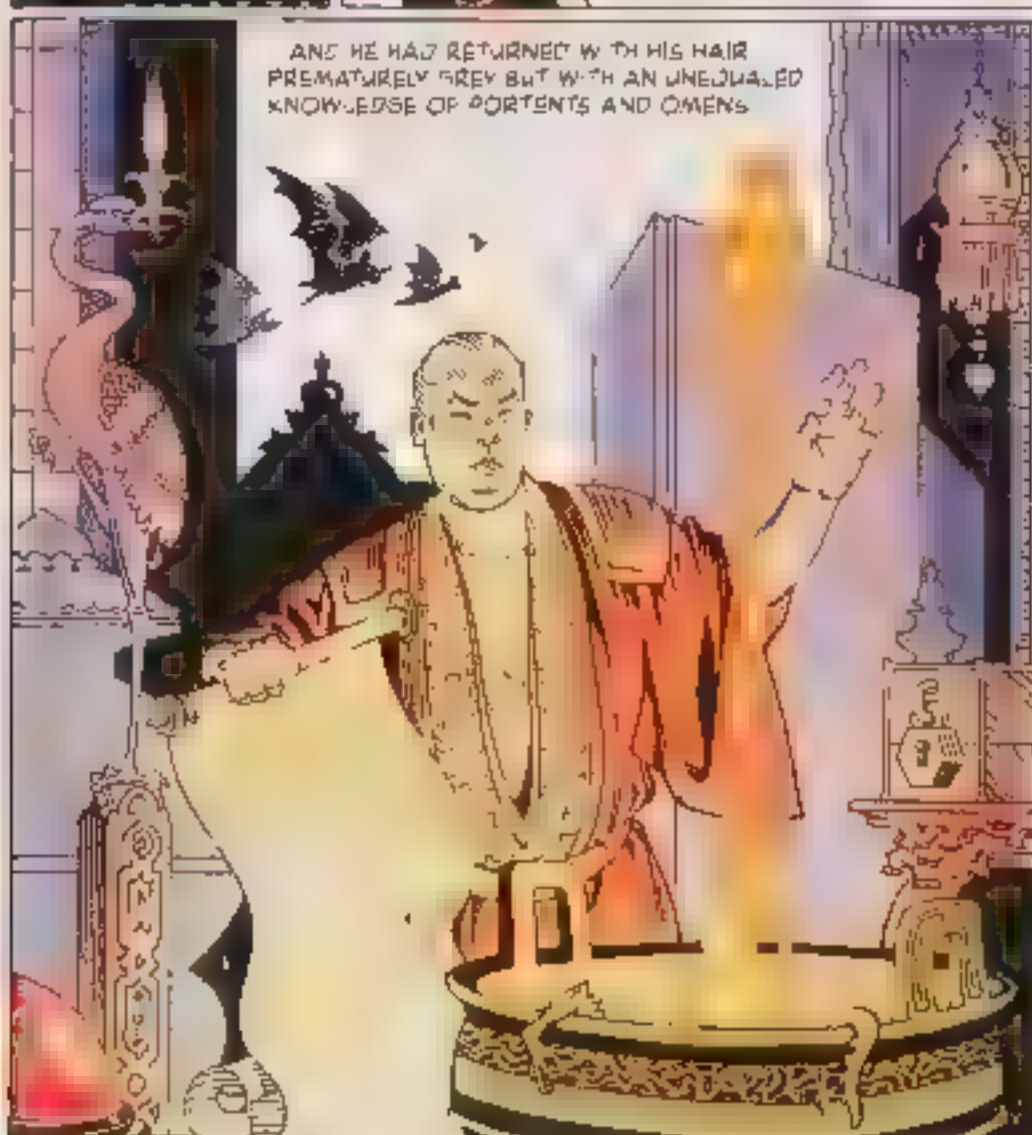
HE COULD REMEMBER
EVERY DETAIL OF HIS
TWO PREVIOUS LIVES



AS A YOUNG MAN HE
TRAVELED TO CHINA



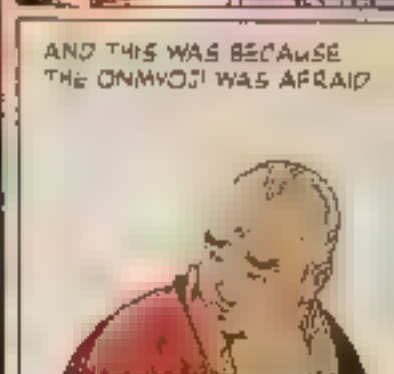
AND HE HAD RETURNED WITH HIS HAIR
PREMATURELY GREY BUT WITH AN UNEQUALLED
KNOWLEDGE OF PORTENTS AND OMENS



HE WAS
RESPECTED
BY THOSE
WHO WERE HIS
SUPERIORS
AND FEARED
BY THOSE
WHO WERE
HIS INFERIORS
BUT WITH ALL
THIS, THE
ONMYOJI
WAS NOT
HAPPY



AND THIS WAS BECAUSE
THE ONMYOJI WAS AFRAID



EVER SINCE HE COULD
REMEMBER. SINCE HE
WAS A TINY CHILD HE
HAD BEEN AFRAID



AND EVERY THING HE LEARNED EVERY
STRAP OF POWER HE OBTAINED HE
GATHERED IN THE HOPE THAT "I WOULD
DRIVE AWAY THE FEAR



BUT THE FEAR REMAINED. IT WAITED BEHIND HIM, AND IN THE HEART OF
HIM, IT WAS THERE WHEN HE SLEPT AND THERE TO GREET HIM WHEN HE
WOKED IN THE MORNING; IT WAS THERE WHEN HE MADE LOVE, AND
WHEN HE DRANK, AND WHEN HE BATHED.



"I WAS
NOT A FEAR
OF DEATH,
FOR IN HIS
HEART HE
SUSPECTED
THAT DEATH
MIGHT BE AN
ESCAPE FROM
THE FEAR
AND THERE
WERE DAYS
WHEN HE
WONDERED
IF BY HIS
ARTS, HE
WERE TO
KILL EVERY
MAN, WOMAN
AND CHILD IN
THE WORLD,
THAT THE
FEAR WOULD
BE GONE. BUT
HE SUSPECTED
THAT THE FEAR
WOULD STILL
HAUNT HIM
EVEN IF HE
WERE
ALONE



AND
FEAR THAT
PUSHED HIM
INTO THE
DARKNESS



THE MASTER OF YIN-YANG SOUGHT KNOWLEDGE OF THE DEFILERS OF GRAVES. HE MET WITH MISSHAPEN CREATURES IN THE TWILIGHT AND HE DANCED THEIR DANCES. AND HE PARTOOK OF THEIR FEASTS



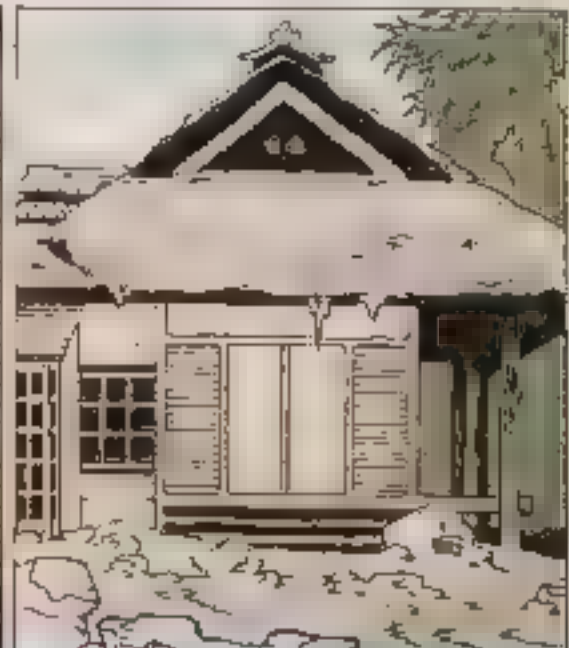
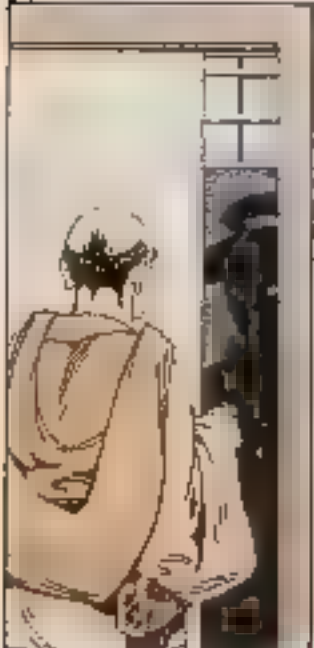
ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY HE KEPT A DILAPIDATED HOUSE AND IN THAT HOUSE THERE WERE THREE WOMEN



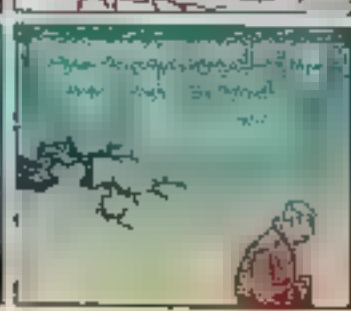
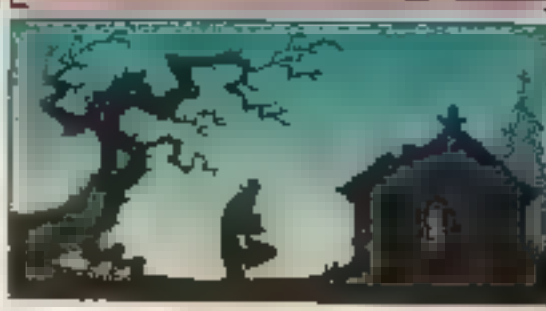
ONE OLD, ONE YOUNG, AND ONE WHO WAS NEITHER YOUNG NOR OLD. THE WOMEN SOLD HERBS AND REMEDIES TO WOMEN WHO FUJIN THEMSELVES IN UNFORTUNATE SITUATIONS



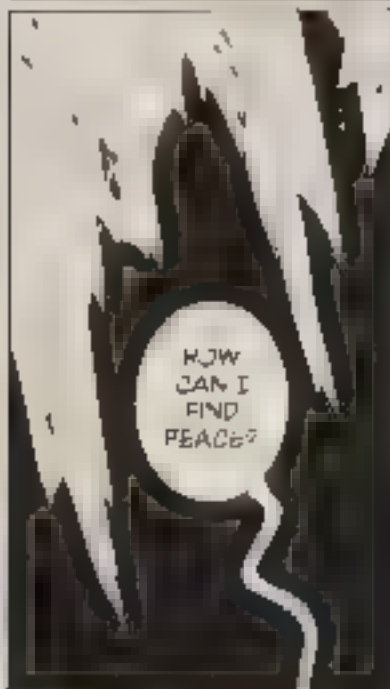
IT WAS WHISPERED THAT UNWARY TRAVELERS WHO STOPPED IN THAT HOUSE WERE NEVER SEEN AGAIN



BE THAT AS IT MAY NO MAN KNEW OF THE ONMYOJI'S INVOLVEMENT WITH THE THREE WOMEN. NOR OF HIS VISITS TO THE HOUSE ON THOSE NIGHTS WHEN THE MOON WAS DARK



ONE
NIGHT
BEFORE THE
EVENTS PRE-
VIOUSLY
RELATED.



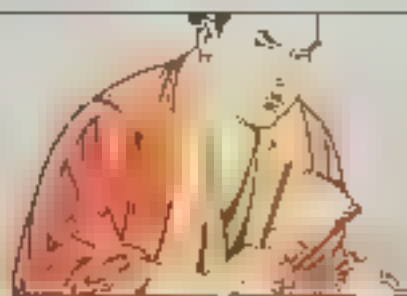
HOW
CAN I
FIND
PEACE?



THERE IS PEACE
IN THE GRAVE AND A
MOMENTARY PEACE IN THE
CONTEMPLATION OF A
FINE SUNSET



HAMMM



WHY
DO I
HAVE NO
PEACE

BECAUSE
YOU ARE
ALIVE

IF SHE TOUCHED HIM WITH
HER GOLD FINGERS, HE
SHUDDERED

WHERE
CAN I FIND
PEACE

SHE SWALLOWED THE AIR IN
THROUGH HER TEETH

AND HELD IT IN

AND WHEN AFTER OF
ONE A ME

SHE EXHALED



IN THE PROVINCE
OF WIND MANY LONG
DAYS OF TRAVEL FROM HERE
TO THE NORTH AND THE
EAST IS A SMALL
TEMPLE

IT IS NO DO
LITTLE IMPORTANT THAT
WAS BUT ONE MAN TELLING
TO THE SISTER OF NOTHING
AND HAS HE TOLD YOU
DEEDS

NOW
I AM
WEAVE
ON THAT
WHEN HE TIES
YOU WILL FIND
TO BE TENSE
AND YOU WILL
FEAR NOTHING
BUT ONCE
HAVE WOVEN
YOU WILL HAVE
ONLY UNTIL THE
NEXT FALL
MOON TO
LARGE IS
TEETH

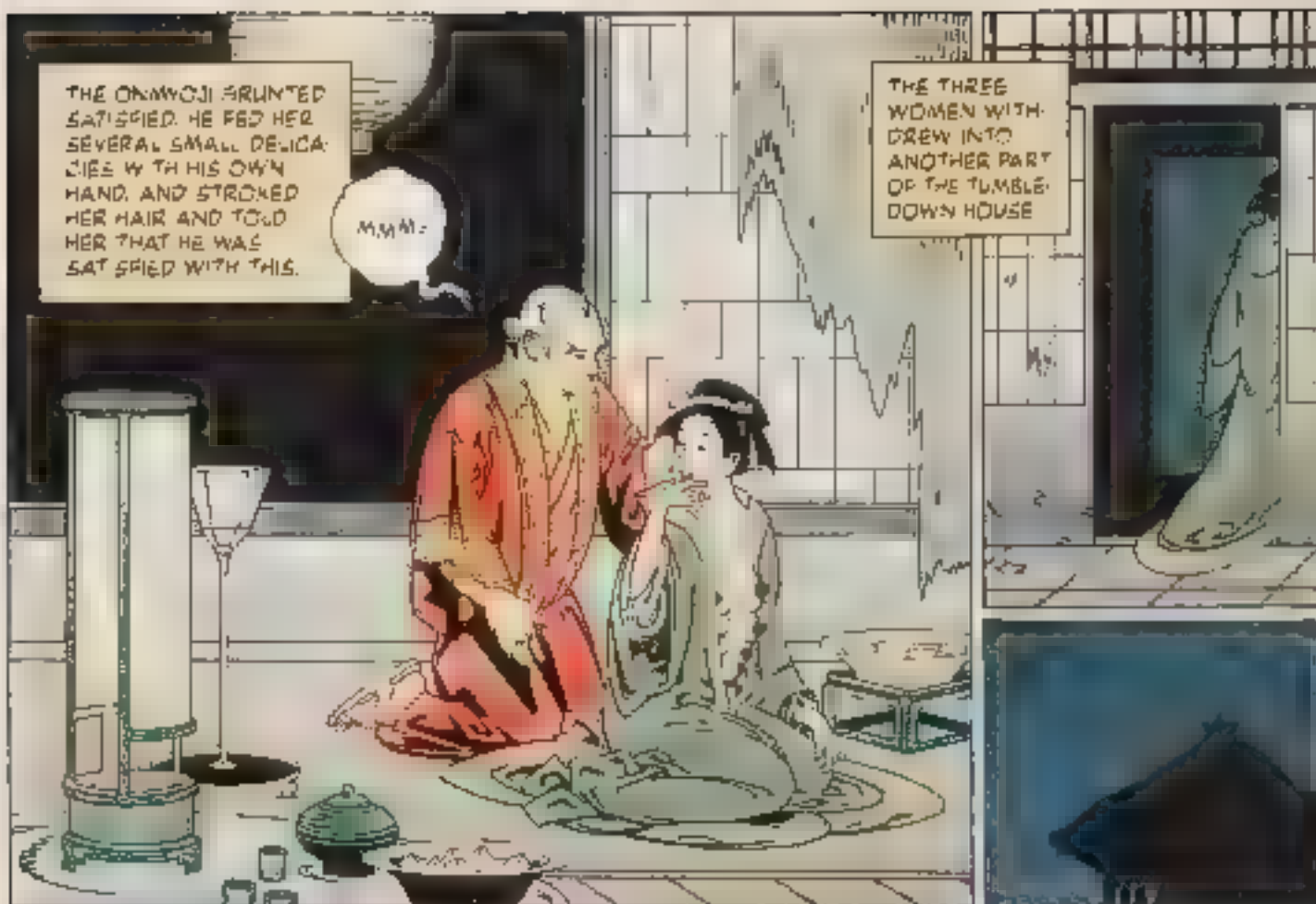


AND HE MUST
BE WORTHY OF
THE NAME OF
THE WEAVER
WILL
FAIL

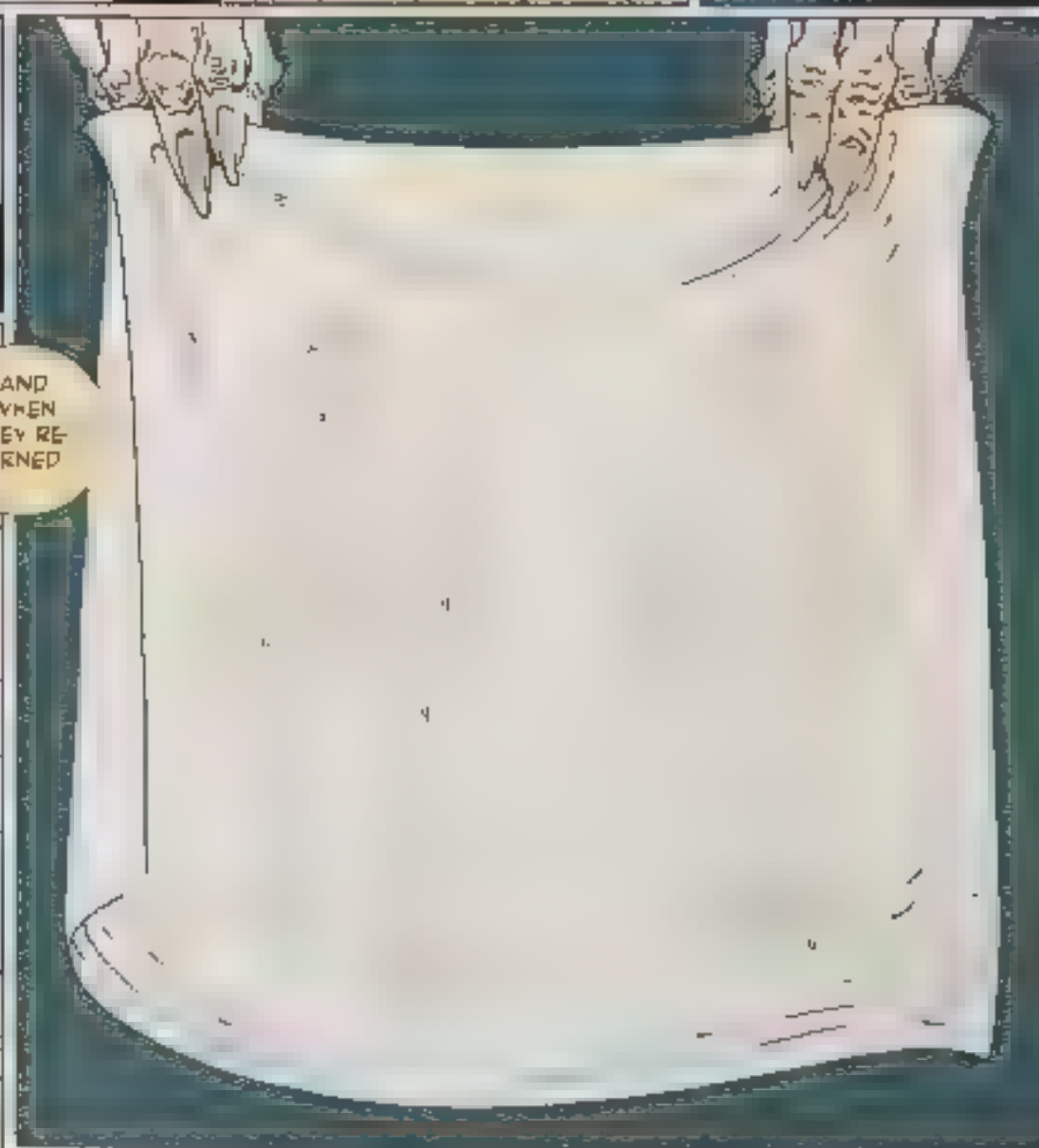
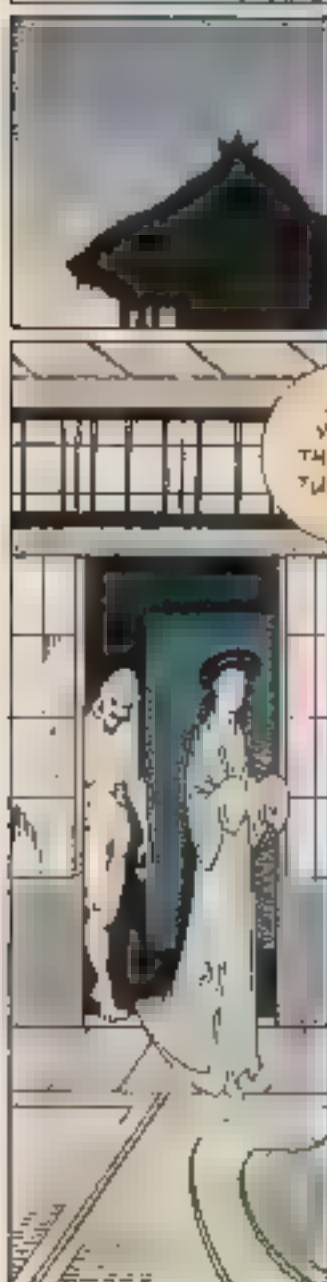
THE ONMYOJI BRUNTED SATISFIED. HE FED HER SEVERAL SMALL DELICIES WITH HIS OWN HAND, AND STROKED HER HAIR AND TOLD HER THAT HE WAS SATISFIED WITH THIS.

MMM.

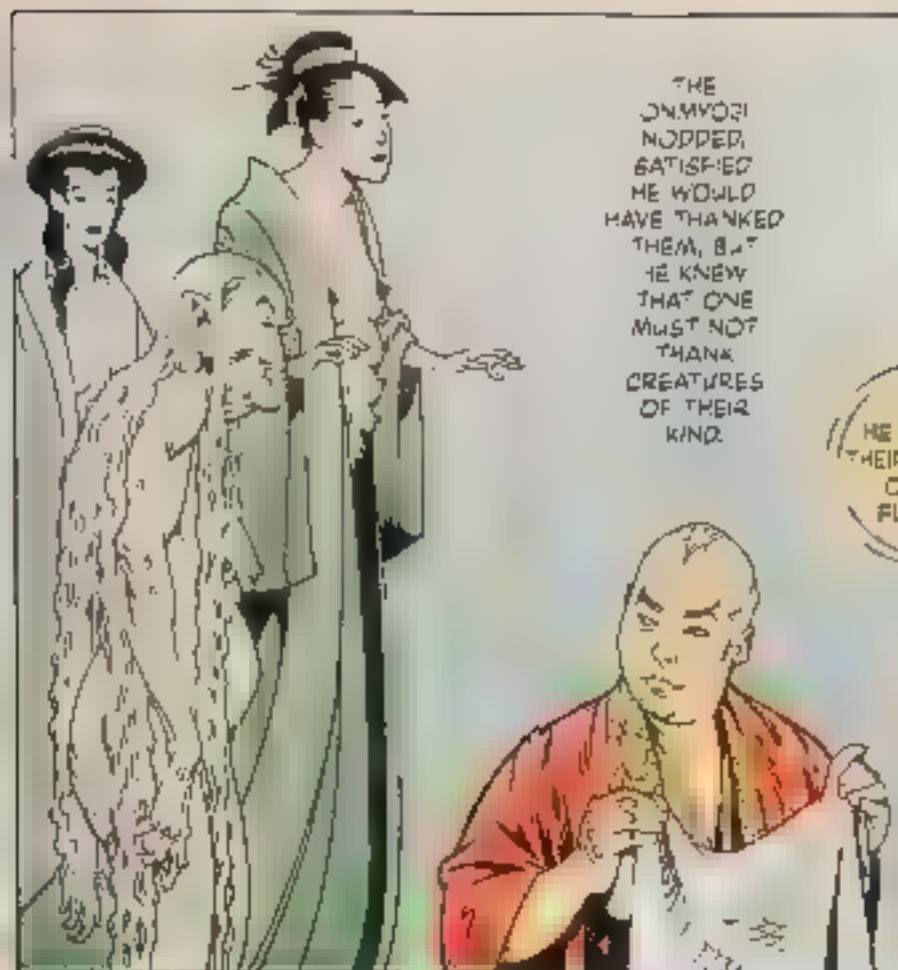
THE THREE WOMEN WITH DREW INTO ANOTHER PART OF THE TUMBLE-
DOWN HOUSE



AND
WHEN
THEY RE-
TURNED



THEY HANDED THE ONMYOJI A SQUARE OF WOVEN SILK. PALE AS MOONLIGHT ON IT WAS PAINTED THE ONMYOJI AND THE MOON, AND THE YOUNG MONK



THE
JINMORI
NODDED,
SATISFIED
HE WOULD
HAVE THANKED
THEM, BUT
HE KNEW
THAT ONE
MUST NOT
THANK
CREATURES
OF THEIR
KIND.

SO
HE PLACED
"THEIR PAYMENT"
ON THE
FLOOR.



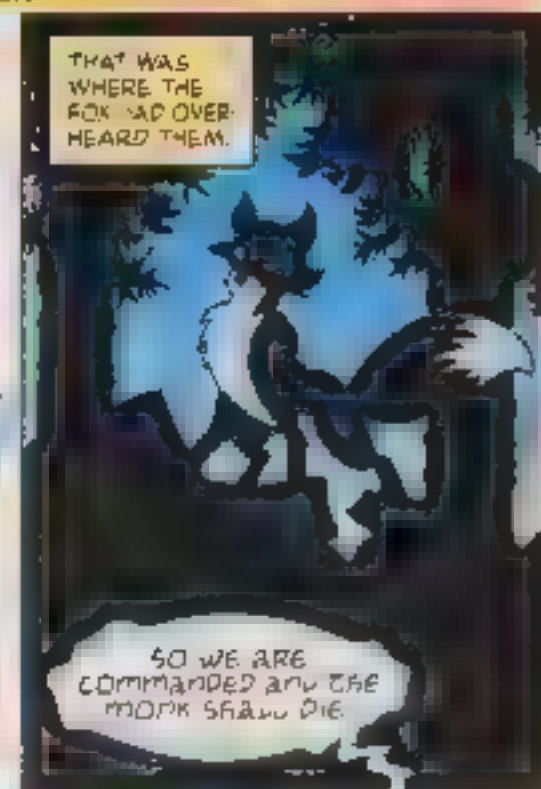
...AND HURRIED HOME.

NOW, THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO
KILL AT A DISTANCE BUT MOST OF THEM
INVOLVE THE INFLECTION OF PAIN

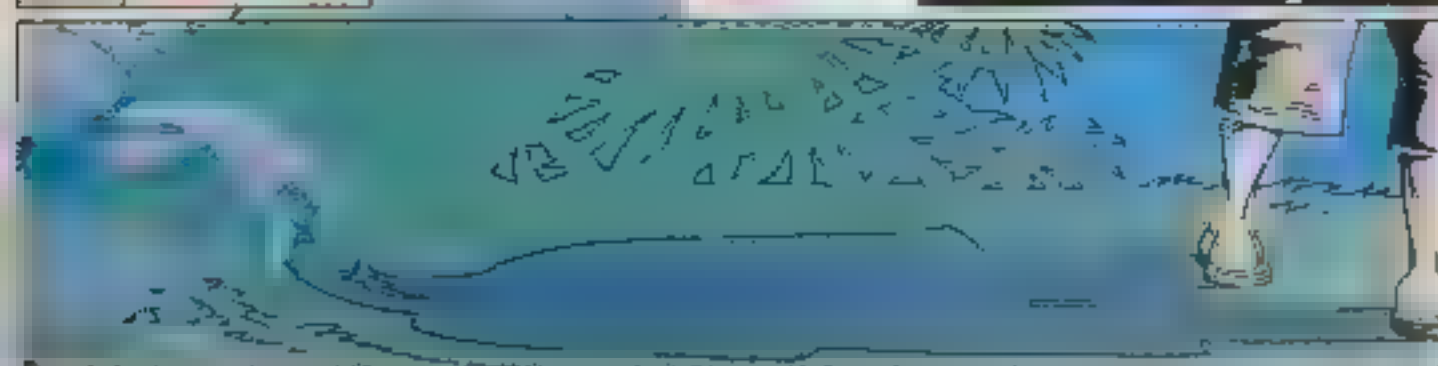
THE MASTER
OF YIN-YANG
CONSULTED
HIS SCROLLS.

THEN SENT HIS DEMONS TO THE
MOUNTAIN WHERE THE MONK
LIVED, TO OBTAIN FOR HIM THINGS
THE MONK HAD TOUCHED.

THAT WAS
WHERE THE
FOX HAD OVER-
HEARD THEM.



SO WE ARE
COMMANDED AND THE
MONK SHALL DIE.



AND HERE AND NOW, THE ONMYOJI SAT IN FRONT OF THE LITTLE TABLE WITH THE LAMP UPON IT, AND THE LACQUER BOX AND THE KEY.

ONE BY ONE HE ADDED A PINCH OF THE SPARK AND IN THE LITTLE FLAME SAID PLACED TO THE FIRE OF THE LAMP A PINCH OF EACH OF THE FIVE ELEMENTS




AND
PINCH WAS THE LAST THING THE DEMONS HAD STOLEN FROM THE MONK: IT WAS A PLATE WITH NOTHING ON IT, WHICH CONTAINED A SCRAP OF THE MONK'S SHADOW THAT THE DEMONS HAD STOLEN FROM HIM.

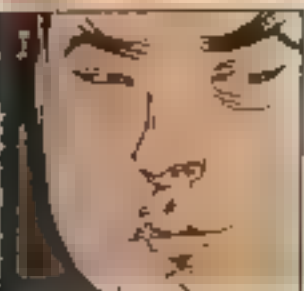
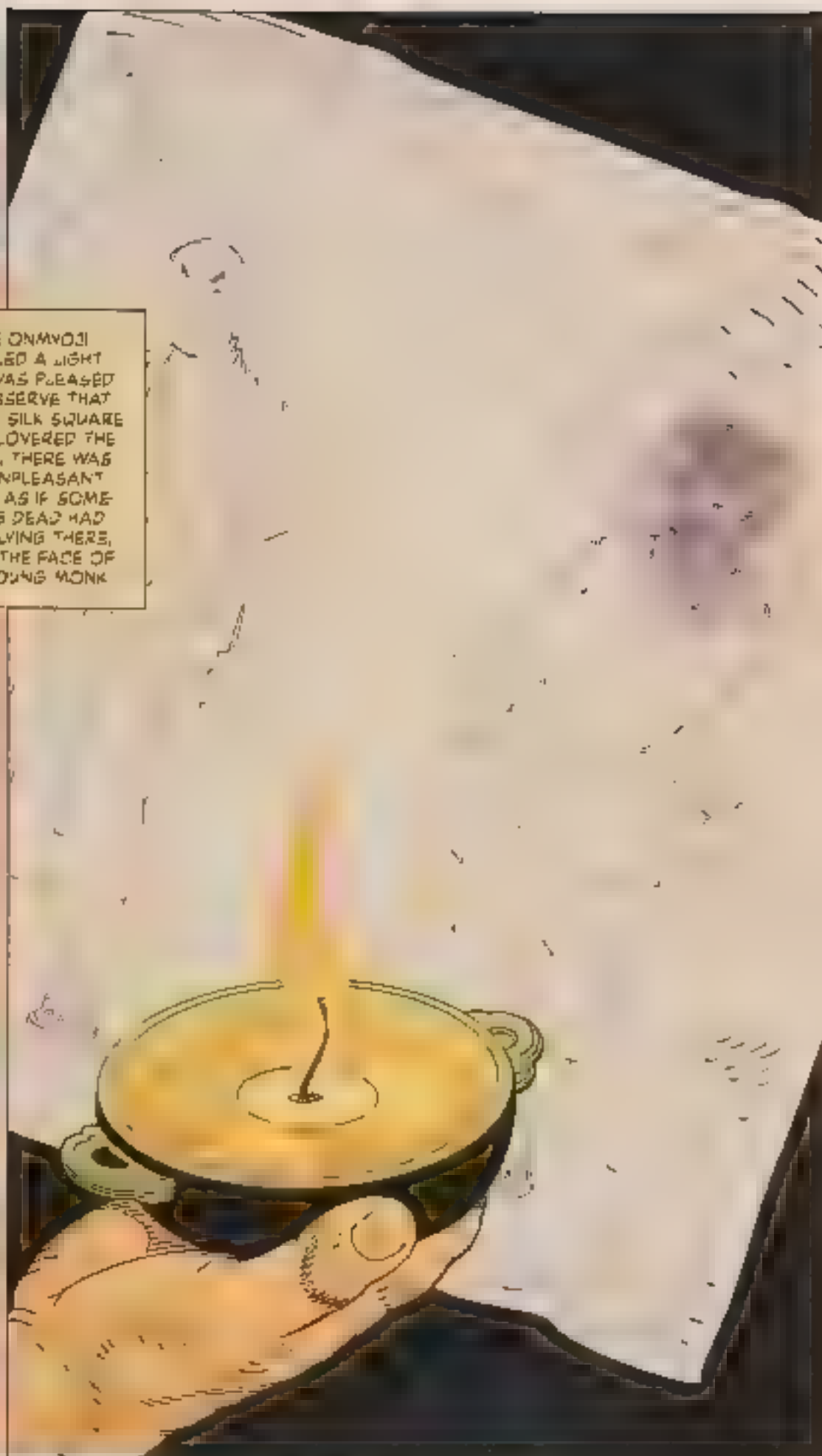
AND WHEN HE ADDED THE FINAL PINCH OF NOTHING, THE FLAME BURNED SO HIGH IT FILLED THE ONMYOJI'S CHAMBER WITH LIGHT.



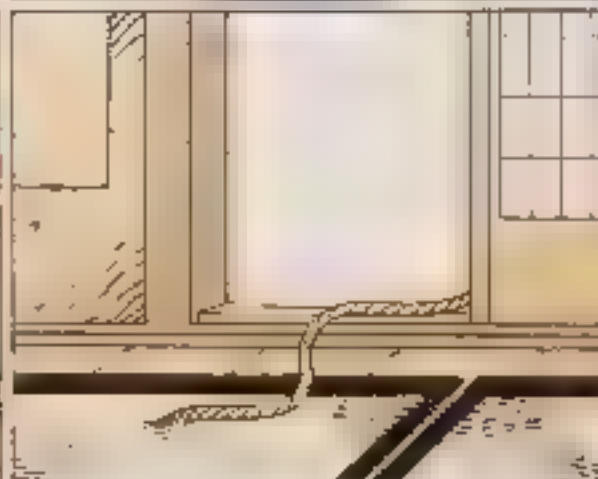
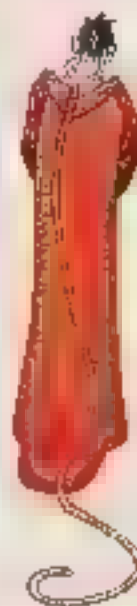
AND THEN IT WAS GONE, LEAVING THE ROOM IN DARKNESS.

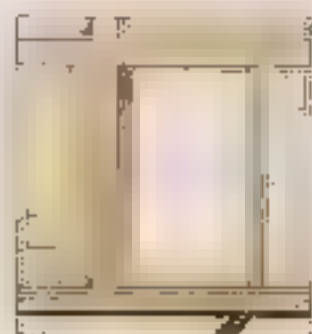
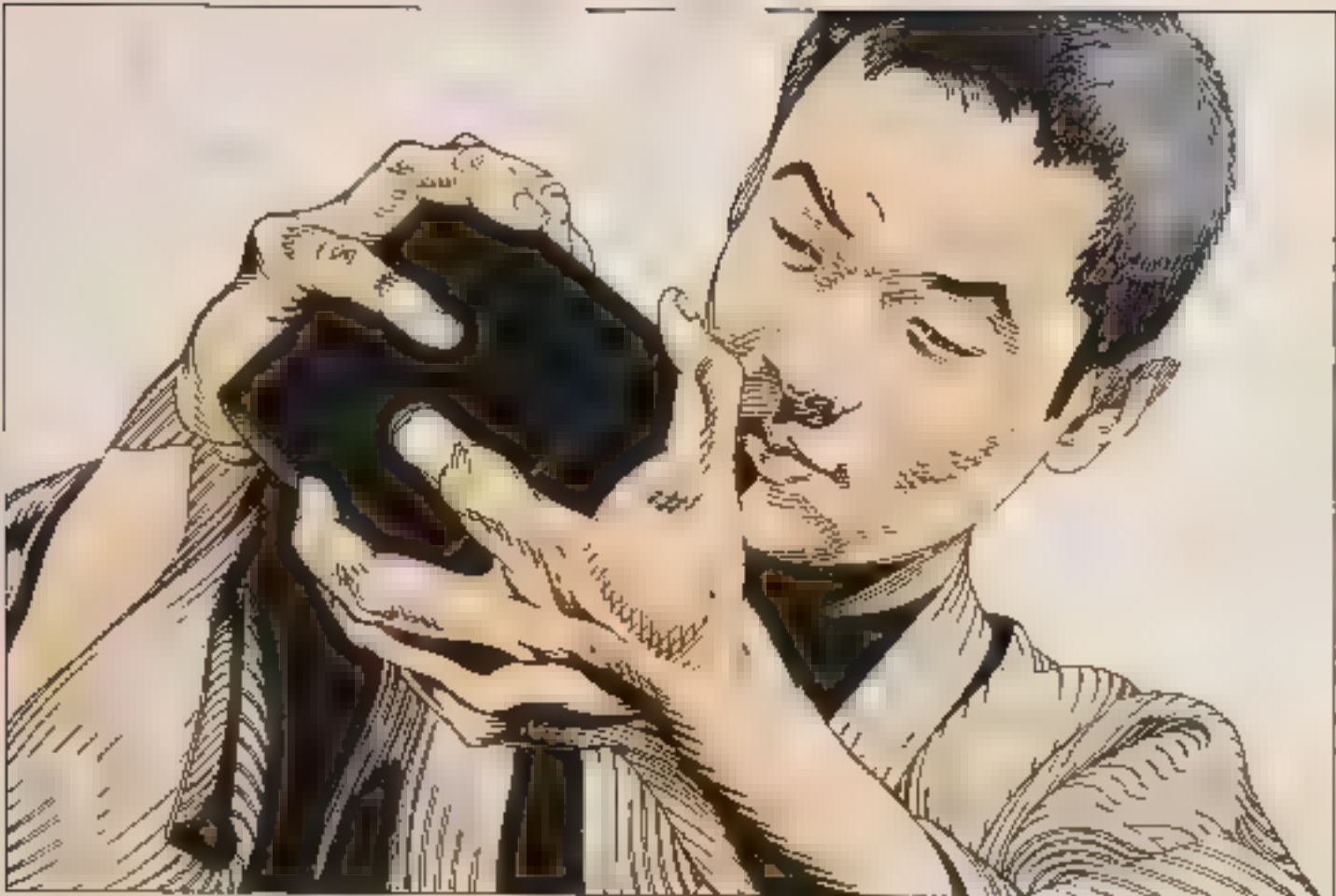


THE ONMYOJI
KINDLED A LIGHT
AND WAS PLEASED
TO OBSERVE THAT
ON THE SILK SQUARE
THAT COVERED THE
TABLE, THERE WAS
AN UNPLEASANT
STAIN, AS IF SOME
THING DEAD HAD
BEEN LYING THERE,
OVER THE FACE OF
THE YOUNG MONK



IN THE
MUNK'S
DREAM
THAT NIGHT
HE WAS
STANDING
IN HIS
FATHER'S
HOUSE.
BEFORE HIS
FATHER
HAD LOST
HIS HOUSE
AND ALL HE
OWNED IN
HIS DISGRACE.
FOR HIS
FATHER HAD
POWERFUL
ENEMIES
AND HAD
DIED BY
HIS OWN
HAND.





WHEN HE WOKE HE FELT TROUBLED AND DISCOMFITED, WONDERING IF THE DREAM WAS AN OMEN OR A WARNING.

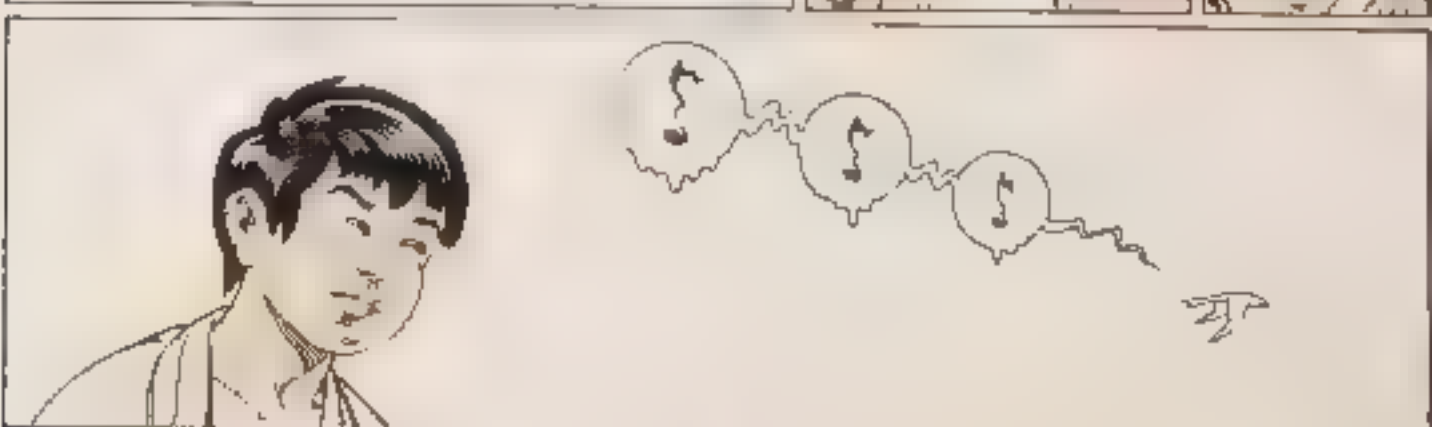
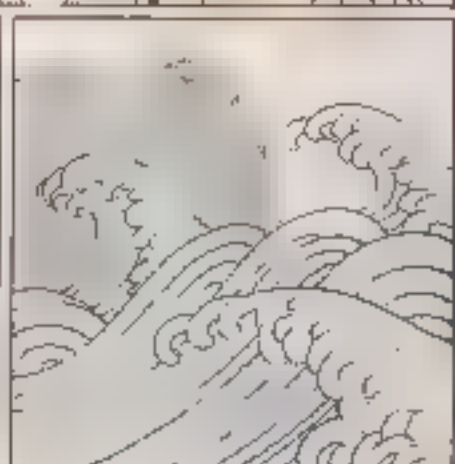
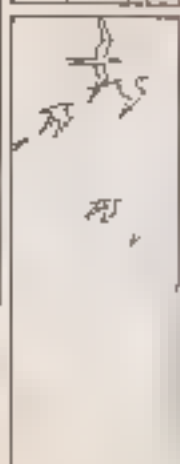
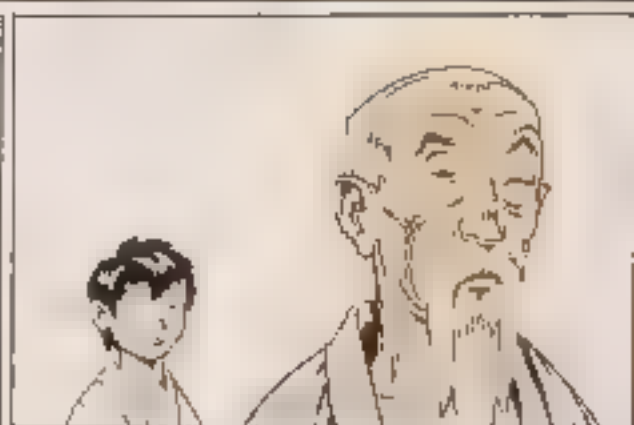
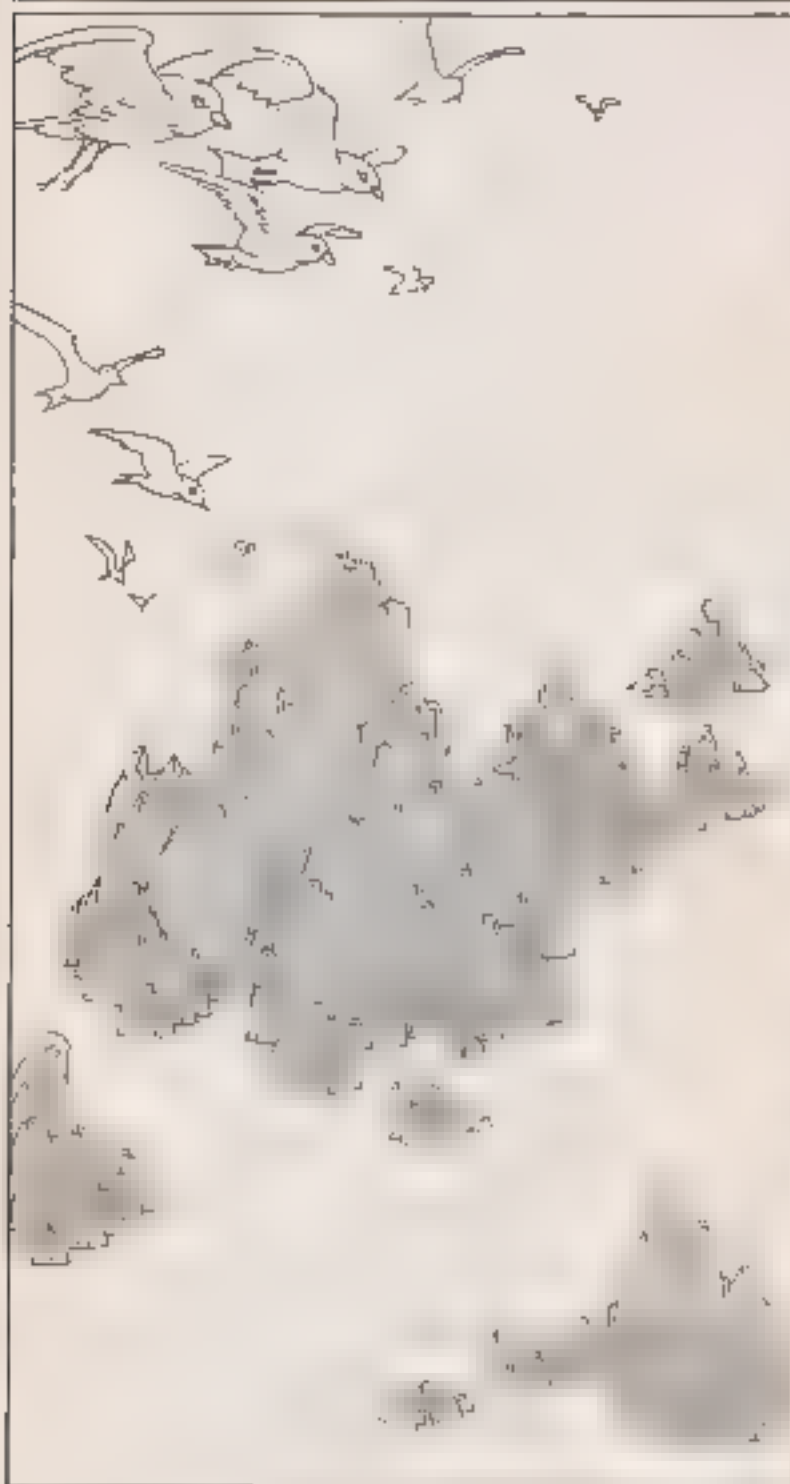
IF IT WAS AN EVIL DREAM THEN MAY A SAKU TAKE IT

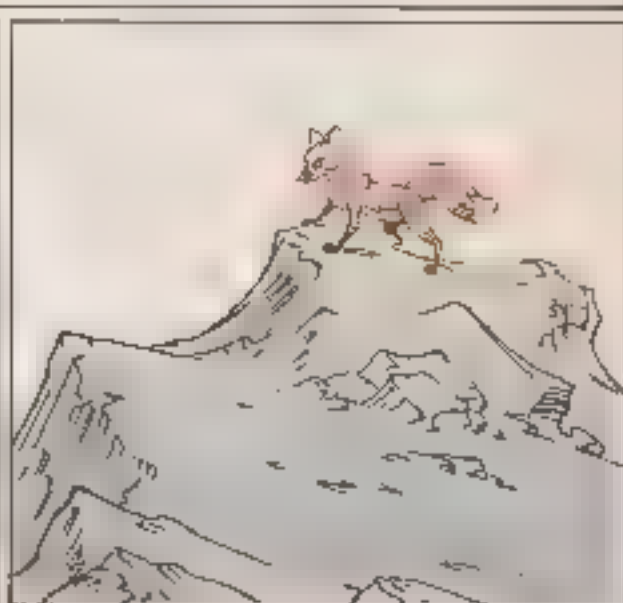
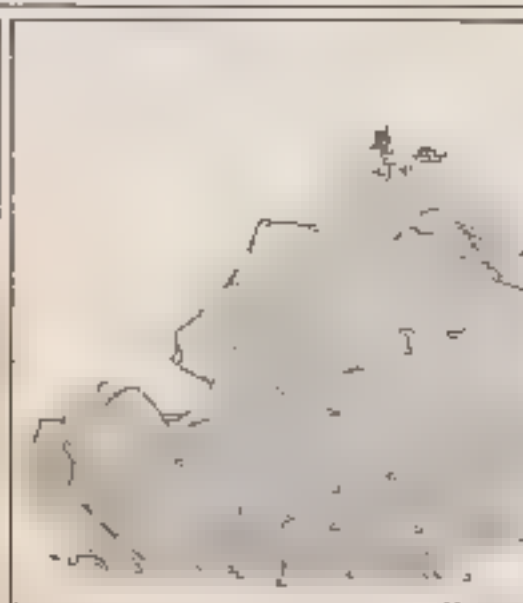
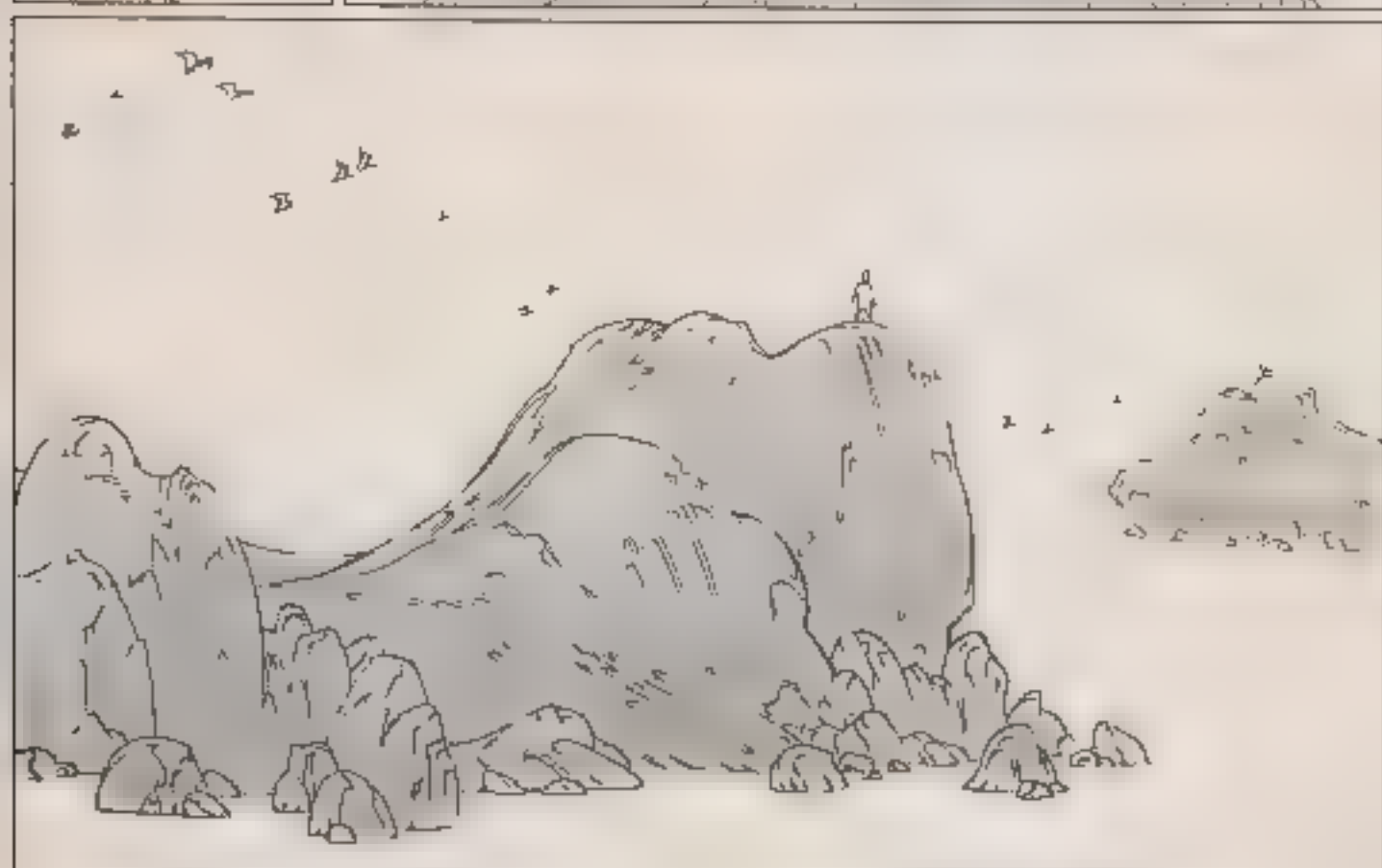
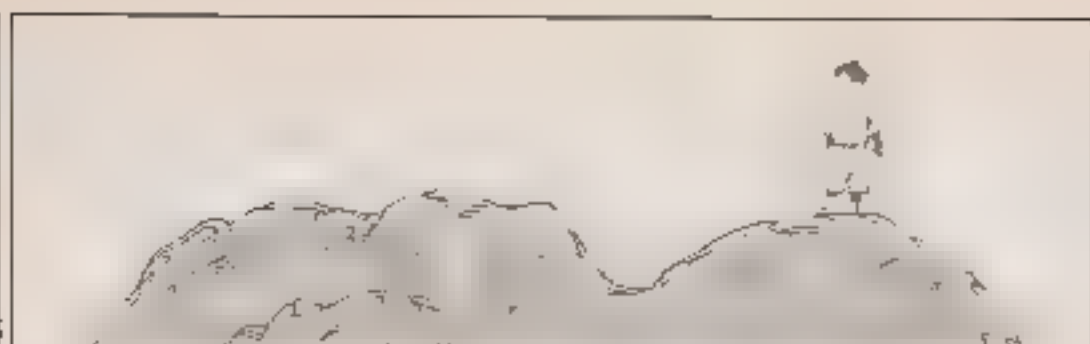
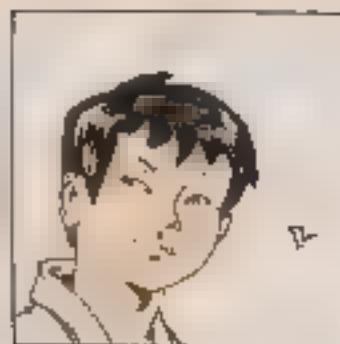


AND HE ROSE AND WENT OUT TO BRING IN WATER AND BEGIN HIS DAY



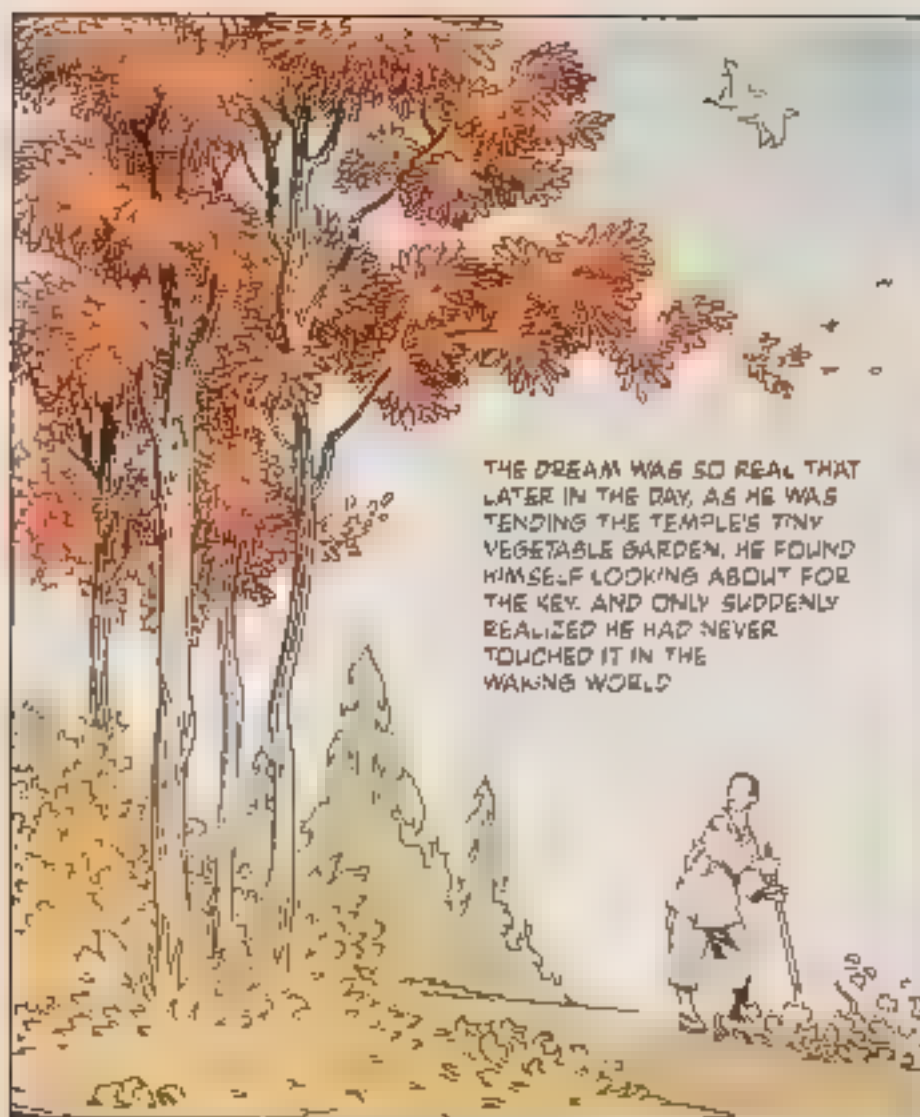
ON THE SECOND NIGHT THE MONK DREAMED THAT HIS GRANDFATHER HAD COME TO HIM. ALTHOUGH HIS GRANDFATHER HAD DIED, CHOKING ON AN UNRIPE PEACH WHEN THE MONK WAS LITTLE MORE THAN A BABY.





HE WOKE WITH HIS HAND CLOSED ABOUT A NONEXISTENT KEY,
FEELING THAT THE EYES OF A FOX WERE UPON HIM.





THE DREAM WAS SO REAL THAT LATER IN THE DAY, AS HE WAS TENDING THE TEMPLE'S TINY VEGETABLE GARDEN, HE FOUND HIMSELF LOOKING ABOUT FOR THE KEY. AND ONLY SUDDENLY REALIZED HE HAD NEVER TOUCHED IT IN THE WAKING WORLD

THAT NIGHT THE MONK EXPECTED ANOTHER DARK DREAM. AS HE CLOSED HIS EYES,



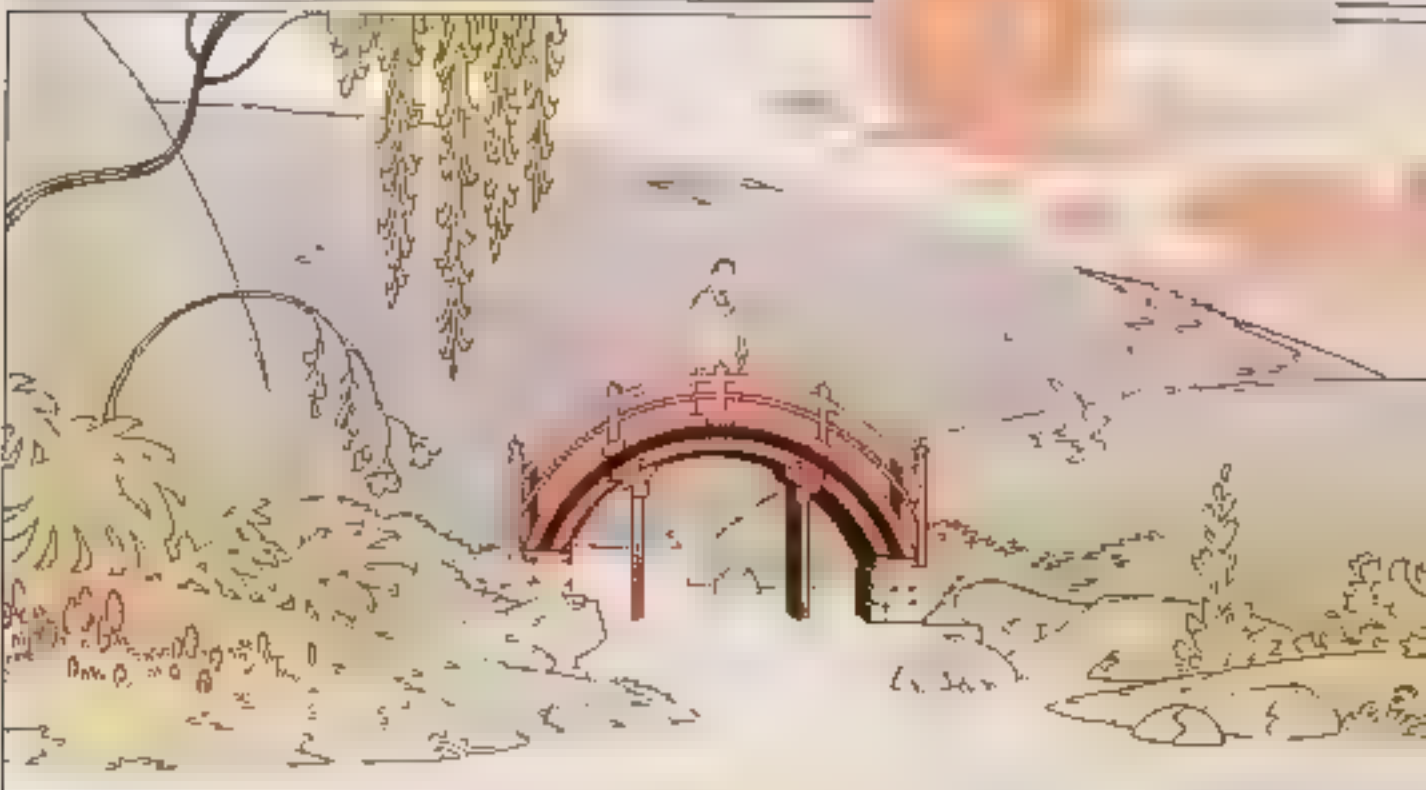
HE HEARD SOMETHING AT HIS DOOR

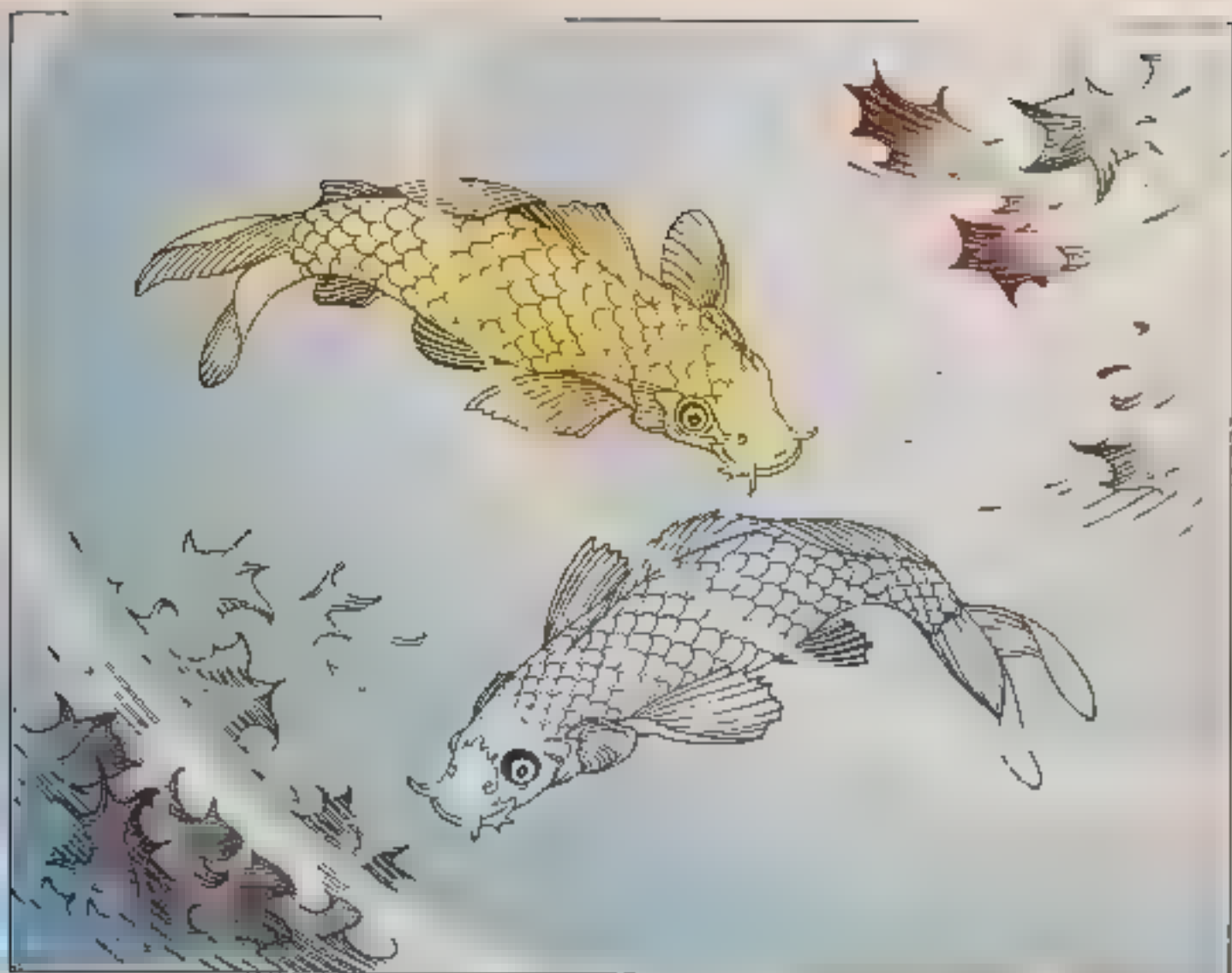


AND THEN HE SLEPT

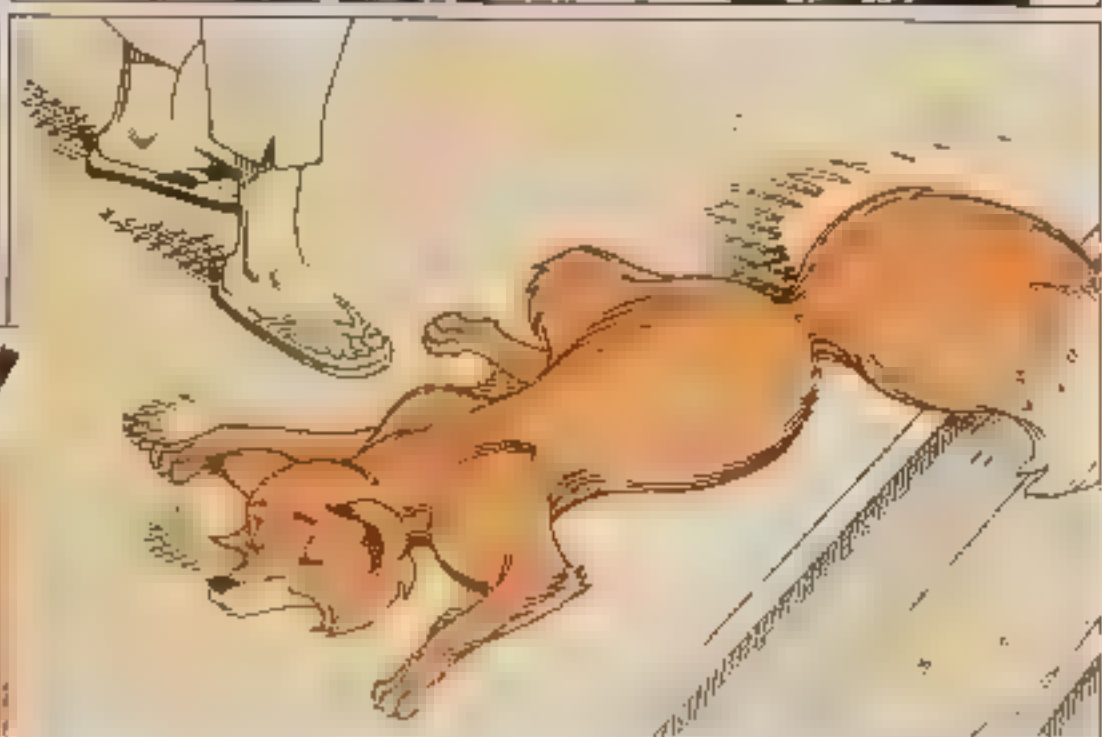


BUT FOR THE FIRST PART OF THE NIGHT, HE DREAMED OF NOTHING AT ALL



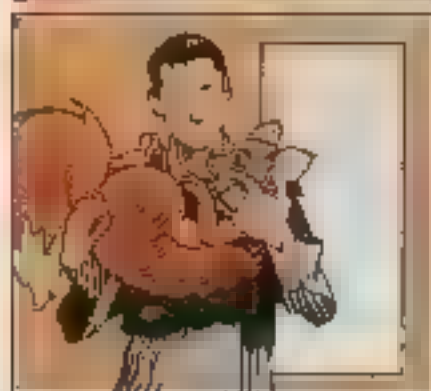


HE WOKE, CERTAIN
THAT THE DREAM
WAS A GOOD OMEN,
AND RELIEVED THAT
THE DAYS OF DARK
DREAMS WERE
DONE WITH



UNTIL HE STUMBLED OVER THE BODY OF THE FOX, HIS EYES CLOSED, STRUCK HER
OUT ACROSS THE THRESHOLD OF THE TEMPLE

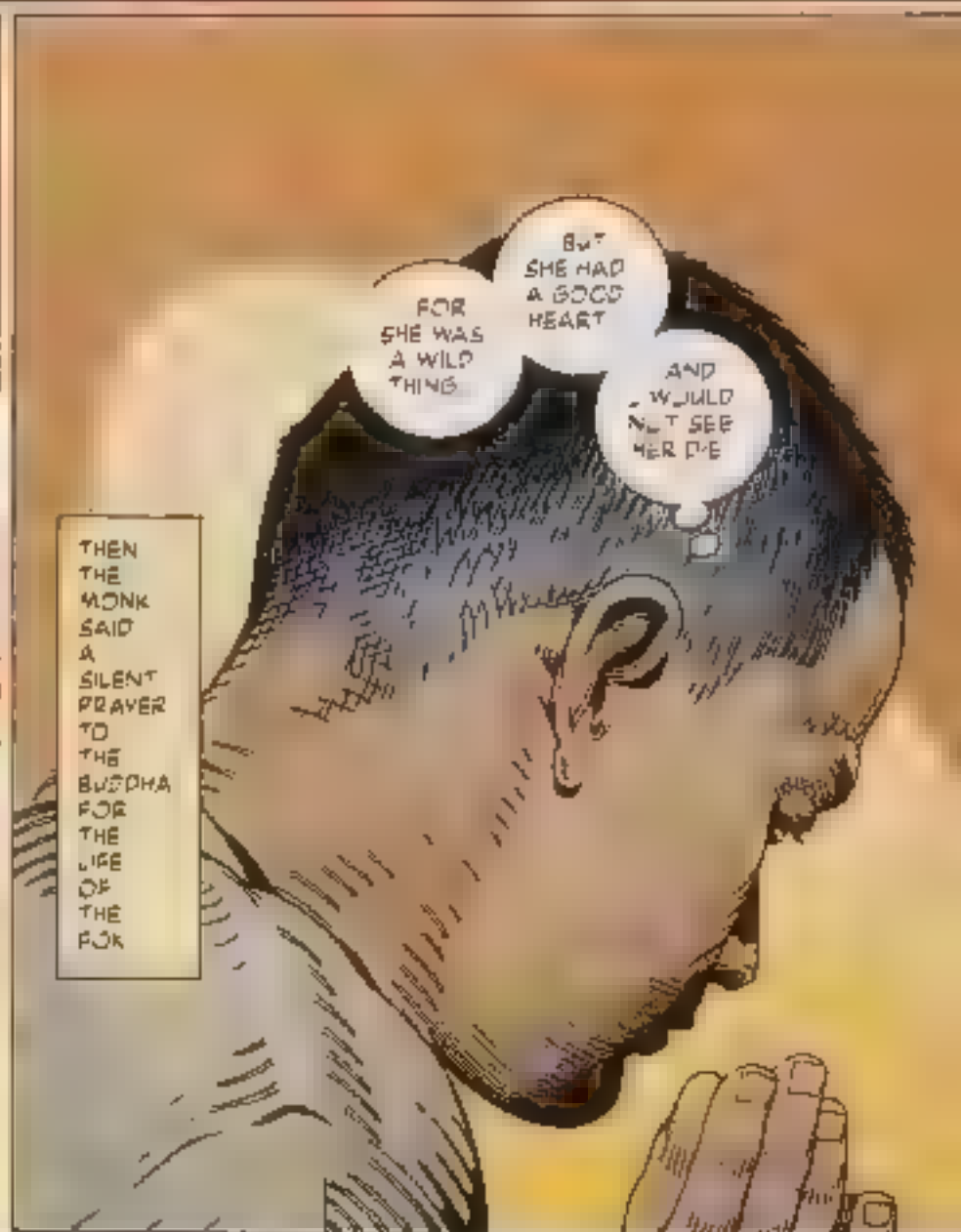
AT FIRST THE MONK
BELIEVED THE FOX
WAS DEAD THEN HE
PERCEIVED THAT SHE
WAS BREATHING SO
SHALLOWLY THAT ONE
COULD SCARCELY
TELL THAT SHE WAS
BREATHING AT ALL
BUT STILL SHE WAS
ALIVE



THE MONK TOOK THE FOX INTO
THE LITTLE TEMPLE AND SET HER
DOWN BESIDE THE BRAZIER TO
WARM HERSELF



THEN
THE
MONK
SAID
A
SILENT
PRAYER
TO
THE
BUDDHA
FOR
THE
LIFE
OF
THE
FOX



FOR
SHE WAS
A WILD
THING

BUT
SHE HAD
A GOOD
HEART

AND
WOULD
NOT SEE
HER DIE

HE STROKED
HER FUR
AS SOFT AS
THIS TLE DOWN,
AND FELT THE
WEAK BEAT OF
HER HEART



WHEN I
WAS A BOY

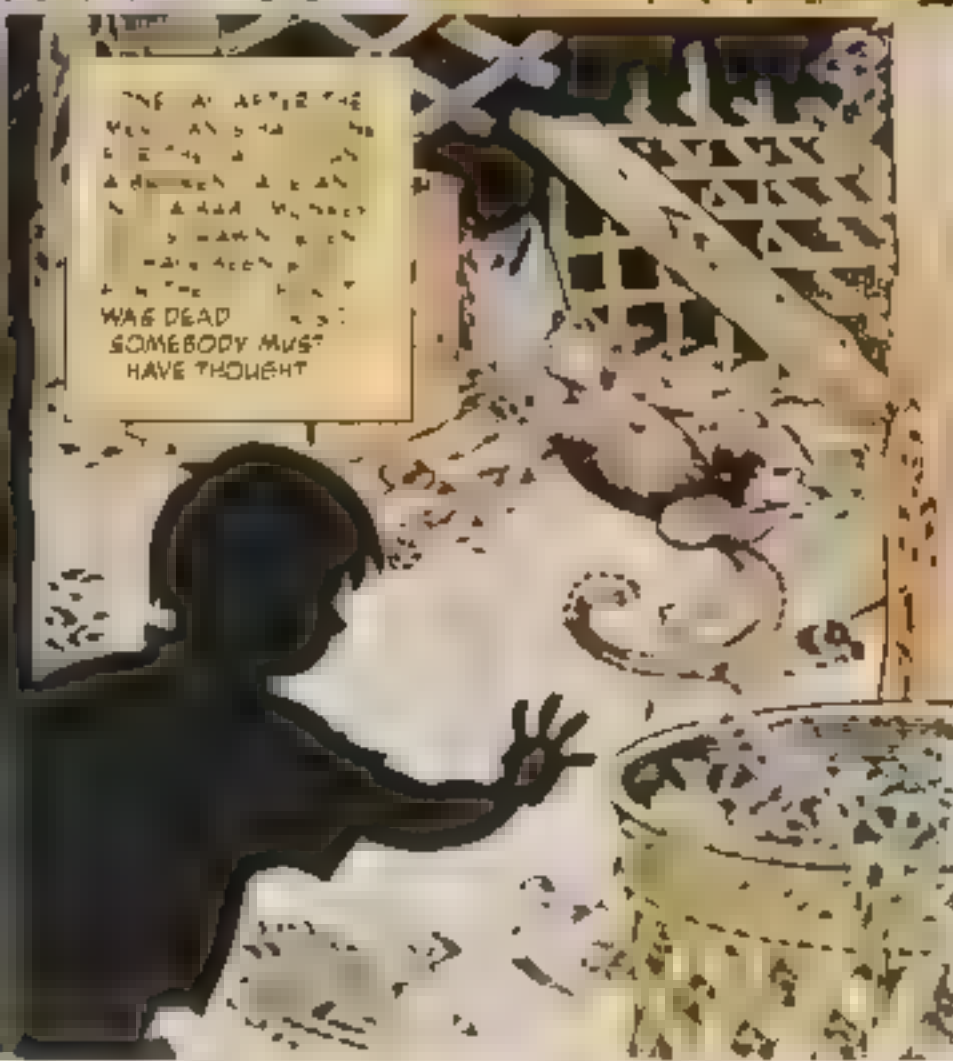
BEFORE
MY FATHER'S
DISGRACE

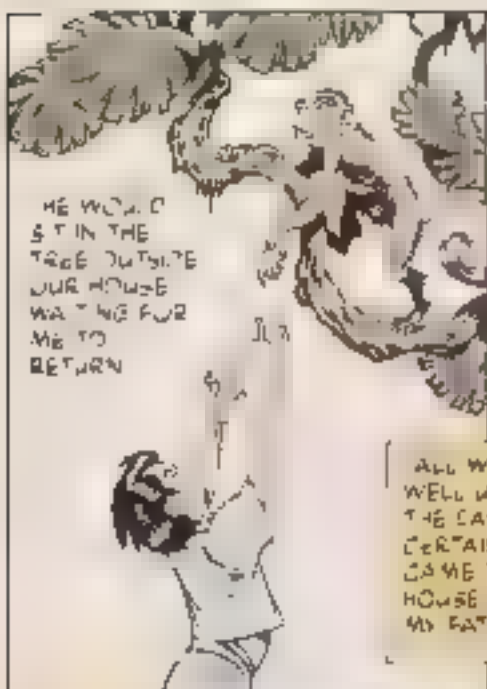
I WOULD FROM TIME TO TIME

ANOTHER MY NAME

WAS A

WAS A

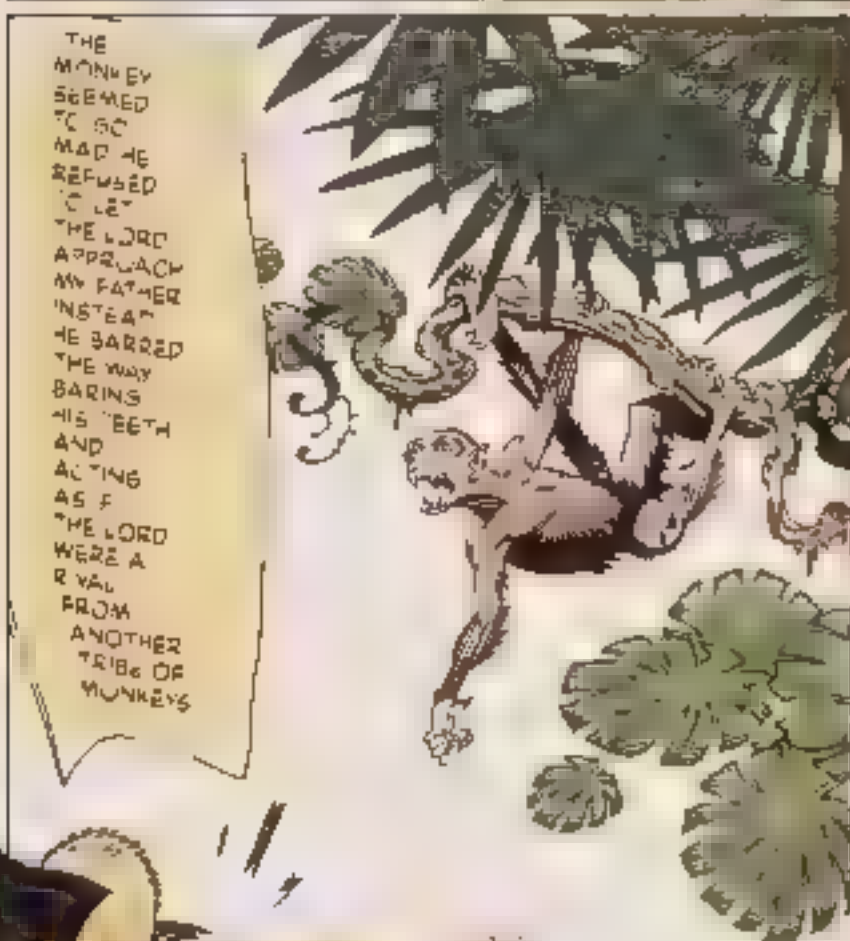




HE WOULD
STAY IN THE
TREE OUTSIDE
OUR HOUSE
WAITING FOR
ME TO
RETURN



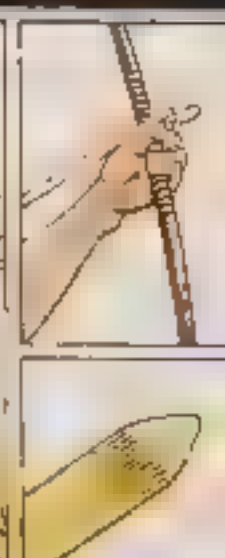
ALL WENT
WELL UNTIL
THE DAY A
CERTAIN LORD
CAME TO THE
HOUSE TO SEE
MY FATHER



THE
MONKEY
SEEMED
TO GO
MAD HE
REFUSED
TO LET
THE LORD
APPROACH
MY FATHER
INSTEAD
HE BARRED
THE WAY
Baring
HIS TEETH
AND
ACTING
AS IF
THE LORD
WERE A
RIVAL
FROM
ANOTHER
TRIBE OF
MONKEYS



THE
LORD
GET
TWO



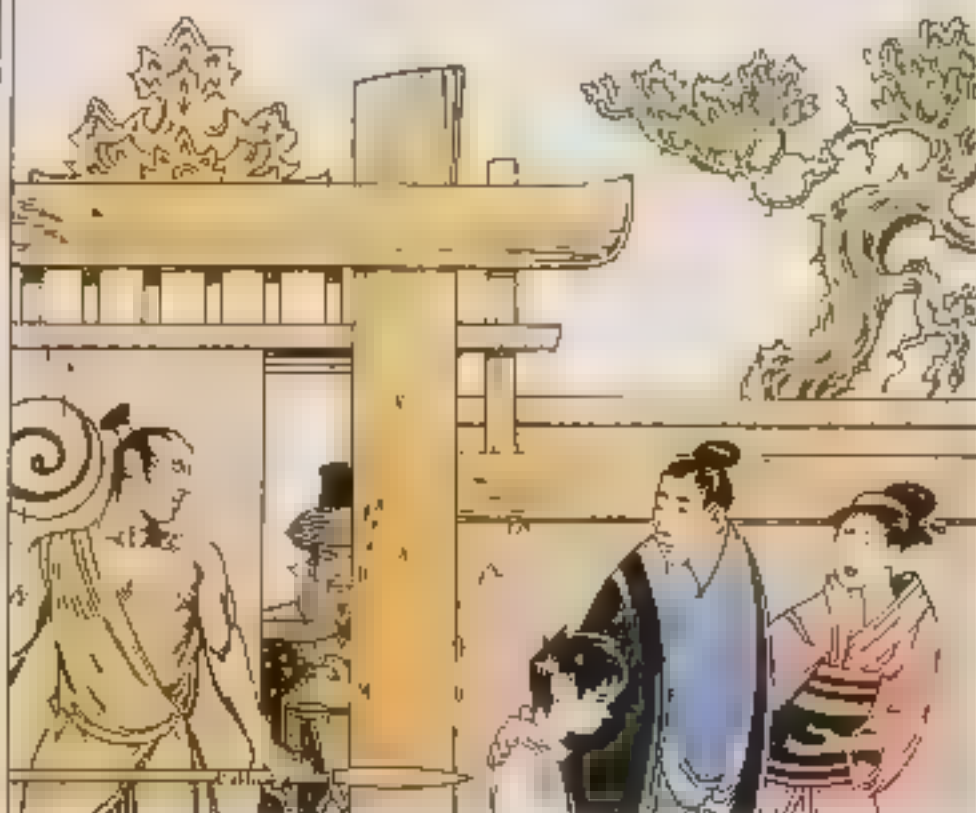
"...AND ONE OF HIS RETAINERS PUT AN
ARROW THROUGH THE MONKEY'S CHEST
ALTHOUGH I BEGGED HIM NOT TO.



"I CARRIED
THE MONKEY
OUT OF THE
HOUSE AND
HE LOOKED
INTO MY
EYES AS
HE DIED.

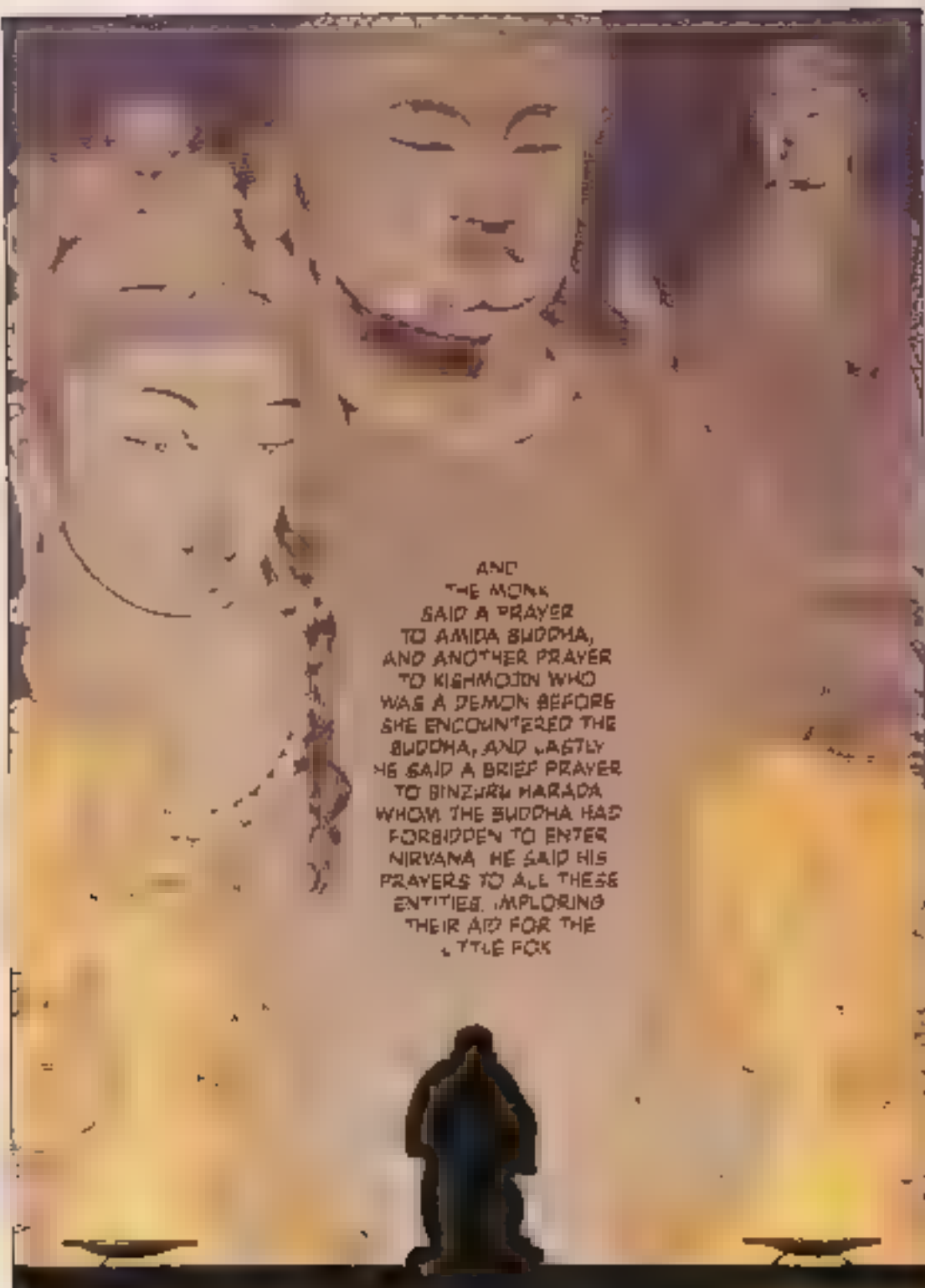


"LATER, WHEN MY FATHER WAS DISGRACED I WAS THROUGH
THE MACHINATIONS OF THAT SELF-SAME LORD AND SOMETIMES
I THINK THAT THE MONKEY WAS BUT A SPIRIT SENT BY AMIDA
BUDDHA TO PROTECT US, IF ONLY WE HAD LISTENED AND SEEN



AND PERHAPS,
WITH ALL YOUR FOX TRICKS
PERHAPS YOU ALSO WISH TO
PROTECT ME





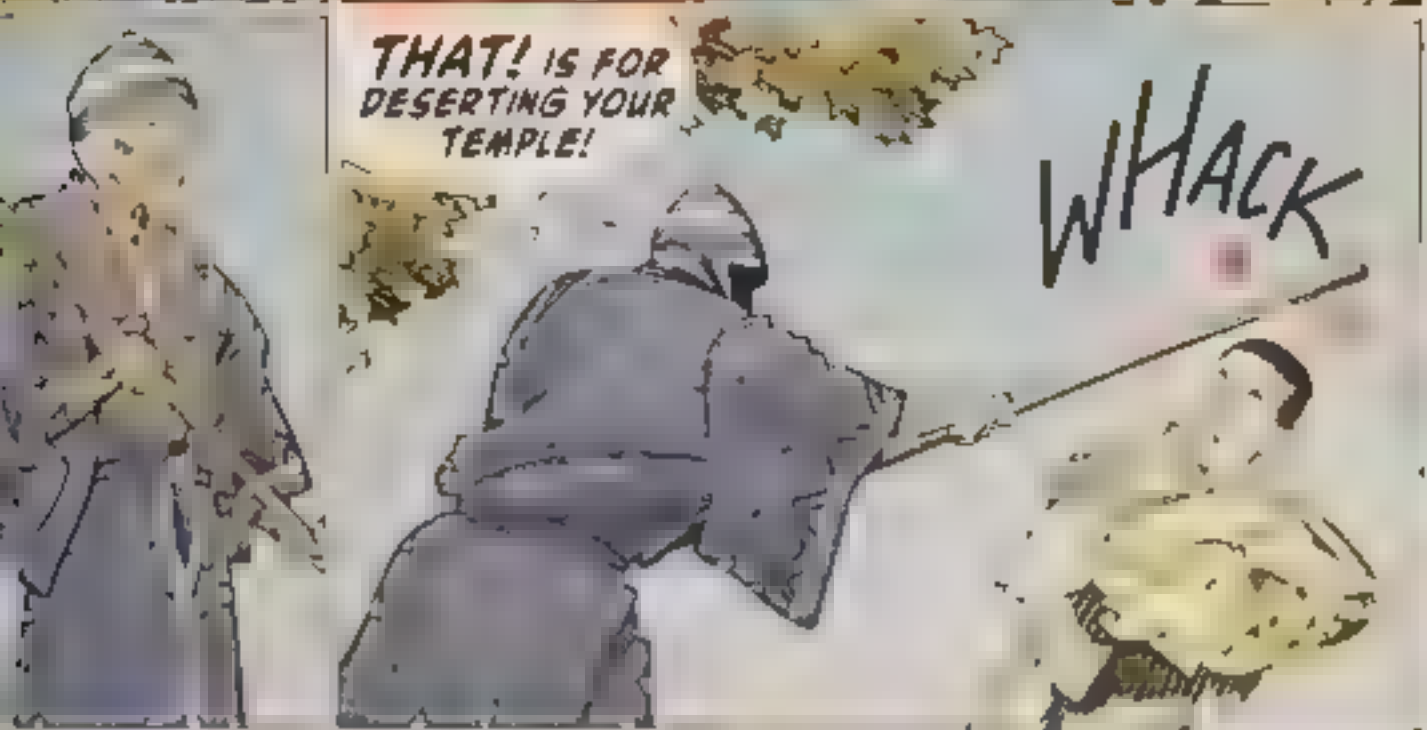
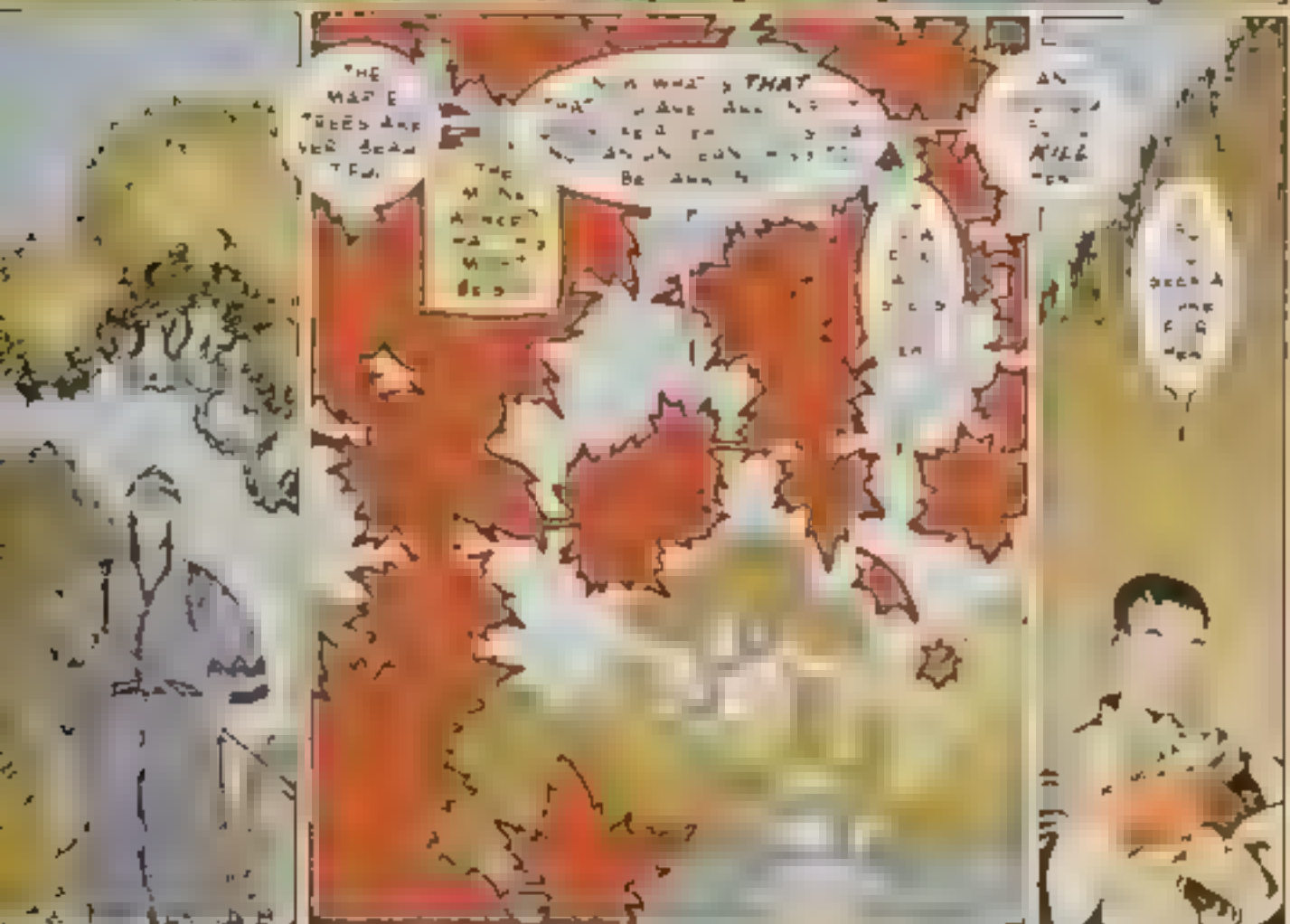
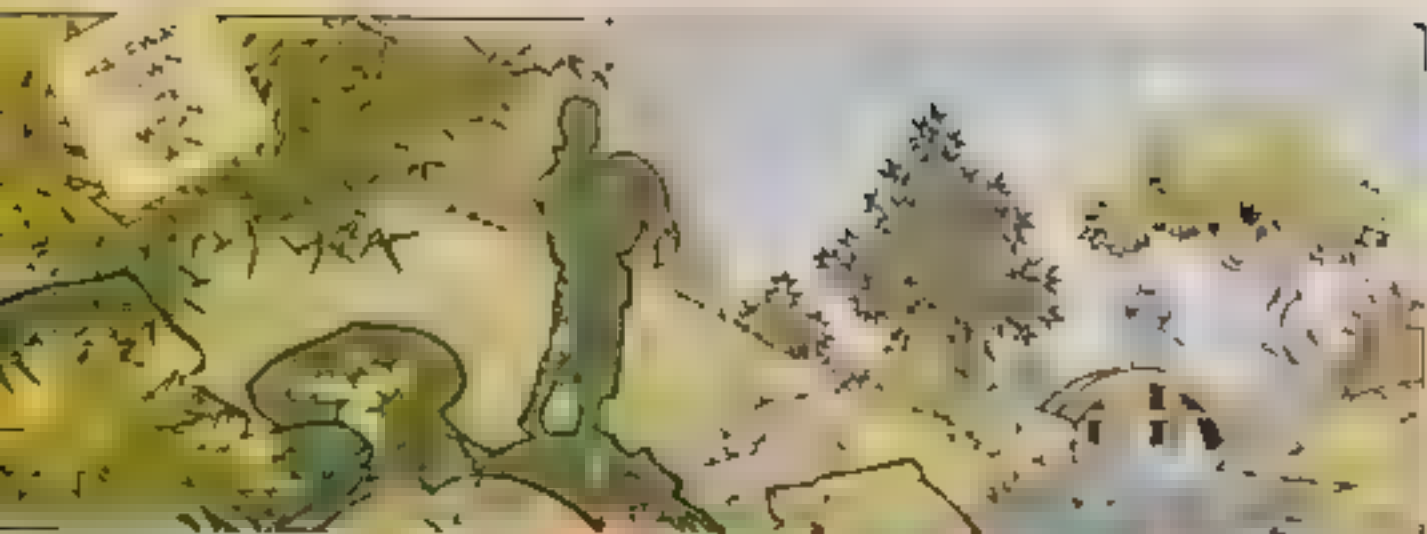
AND
THE MONK
SAID A PRAYER
TO AMIDA BUDDHA,
AND ANOTHER PRAYER
TO KISHMOJIN WHO
WAS A DEMON BEFORE
SHE ENCOUNTERED THE
BUDDHA, AND LASTLY
HE SAID A BRIEF PRAYER
TO BINZURU HARADA
WHOM THE BUDDHA HAD
FORBIDDEN TO ENTER
NIRVANA. HE SAID HIS
PRAYERS TO ALL THESE
ENTITIES, IMPLOING
THEIR AID FOR THE
LITTLE FOX.

AND
AT
THE
END
OF
ALL
HIS
PRAYING
THE
FOX
STILL
LAK
LAMP
AND
STILL
ON
THE
MATTING
LIKE
A
DEAD
THING.

THERE
WAS
A
VILLAGE
AT
THE
FOOT
OF
THE
MOUNTAIN
A
MOST
HALF
A
DAY'S
TRAVEL
AWAY.

PERHAPS THERE
WILL BE A DOCTOR OR
A WISE WOMAN IN THE
VILLAGE WHO CAN
HELP THE FOX.



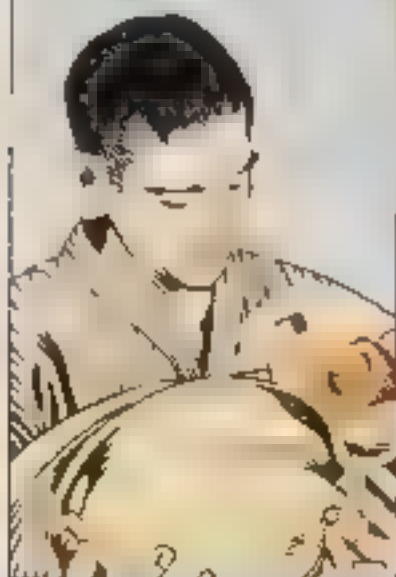




AND THAT!
IS FOR MEDDLING
IN THE AFFAIRS OF
FOX SPIRITS!

WHACK

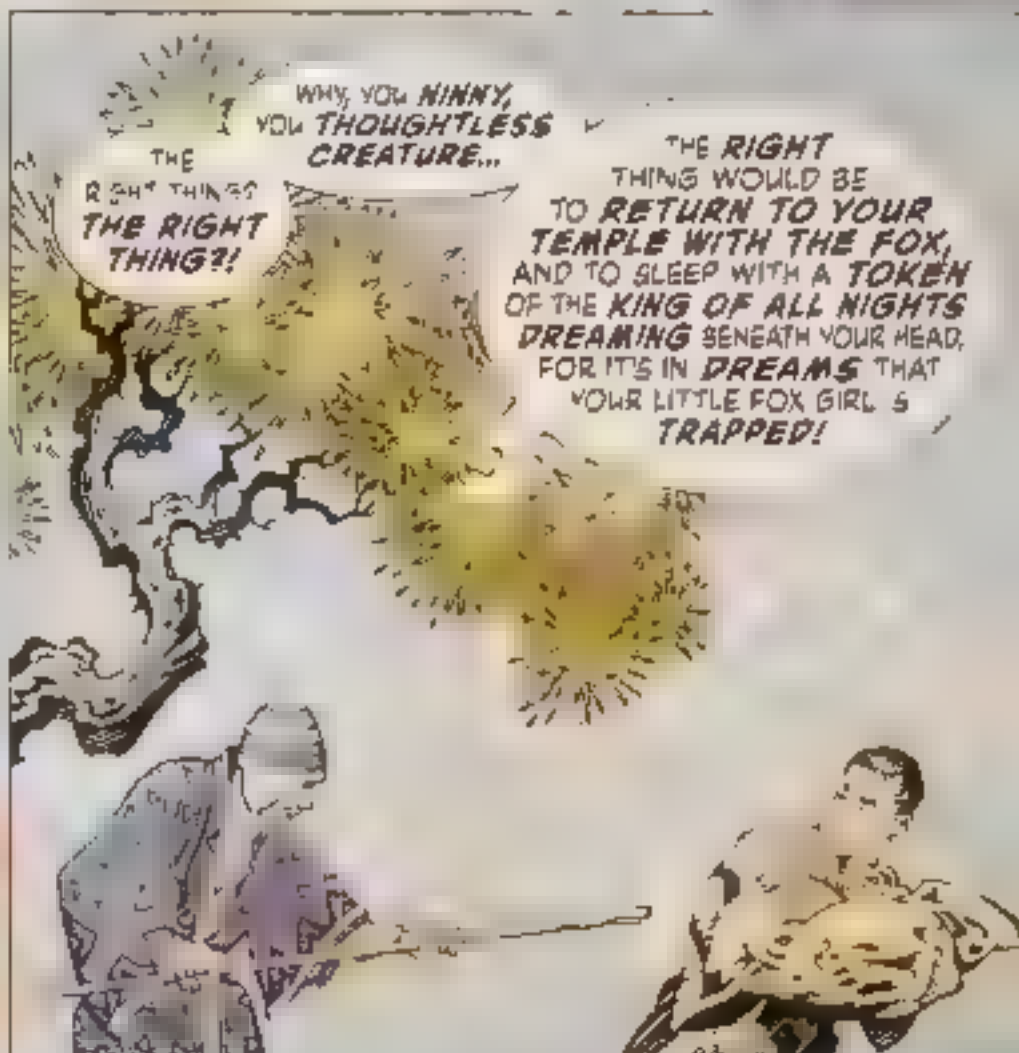
YOU MAY BE
RIGHT TO HIT
ME. I AM NOT IN
MY TEMPLE, AND I
AM CARRYING A FOX
BUT STILL I BELIEVE
I AM DOING THE
RIGHT THING IN
TRYING TO SEEK
A CURE FOR HER



THE
RIGHT THING IS
THE RIGHT
THING?!

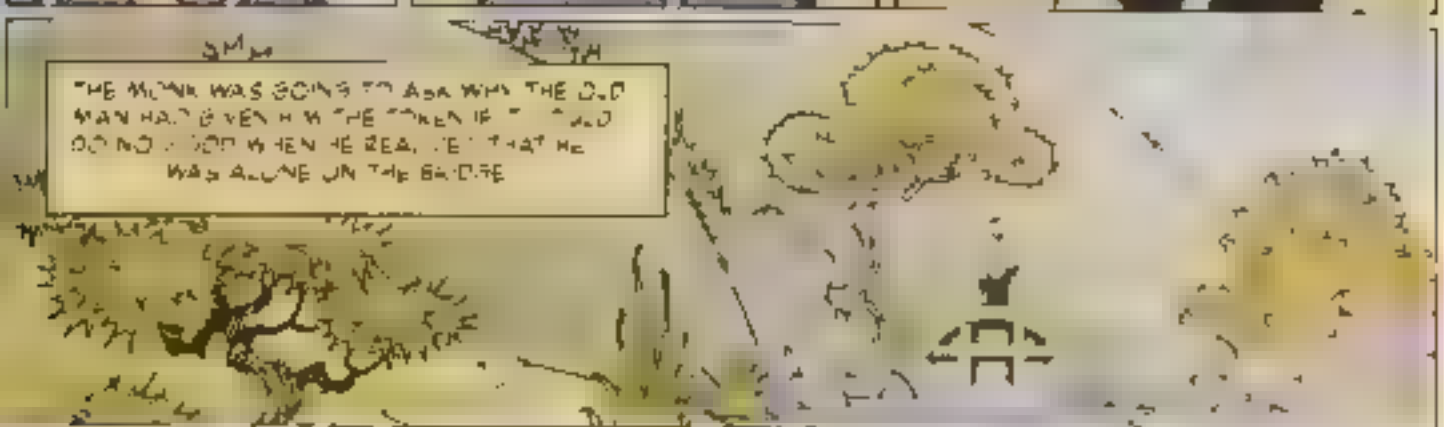
WHY, YOU NINNY,
YOU **THOUGHTLESS**
CREATURE...

THE RIGHT
THING WOULD BE
TO RETURN TO YOUR
TEMPLE WITH THE FOX,
AND TO SLEEP WITH A TOKEN
OF THE KING OF ALL NIGHTS
DREAMING BENEATH YOUR HEAD,
FOR IT'S IN DREAMS THAT
YOUR LITTLE FOX GIRL IS
TRAPPED!



IF I ANALYZE
THIS WITHOUT RECEIVING
A IMMENSURATE BLOW TO
MY PERSON, WHERE WOULD I
FIN. A TALK WITH THE KING
OF ALL NIGHTS
DREAMING





AS THE MONK
WALKED BACK
UP THE MOUN-
TAINSIDE THE
BODY SEEMED
TO GET HEAVIER
AND HEAVIER

BEEN BINZARU
HE OFTEN
APPEARS AS
AN OLD MAN
AND HE WILL
THIS EARTH
UNTIL ONE DAY

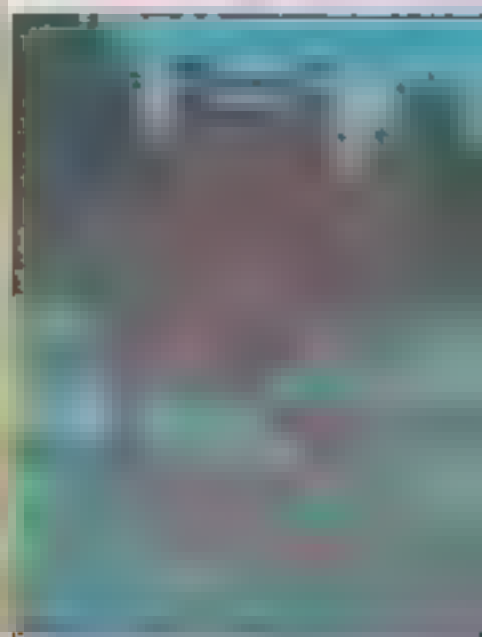
WOULD BIN

THE MONK MADE HIS EVENING DEVOC-
LESS ENTHUSIASM THAN USUAL. IT IS ONE THIN-
OUT ON THE ROAD AND BEAT YOU ACROSS THE HEAD WITH
STICKS IF YOU SAY SOMETHING THAT OFFENDS THEM

AM I
DOING THE
RIGHT THING
HELPING
THE
FOX?

I
DO NOT
KNOW.

BUT
I CANNOT
ABANDON
HER



IN THE
FLICKERING
LIGHT OF
THE BRATIER
THE MONK
EXPERIENCED
A SENSIBLE
ILLUSION -
IT SEEMED
TO HIM
THAT A
SLIP OF
HIS SHADOW
WAS MISSING.
GONE AS IF
IT HAD
BEEN
TORN
AWAY

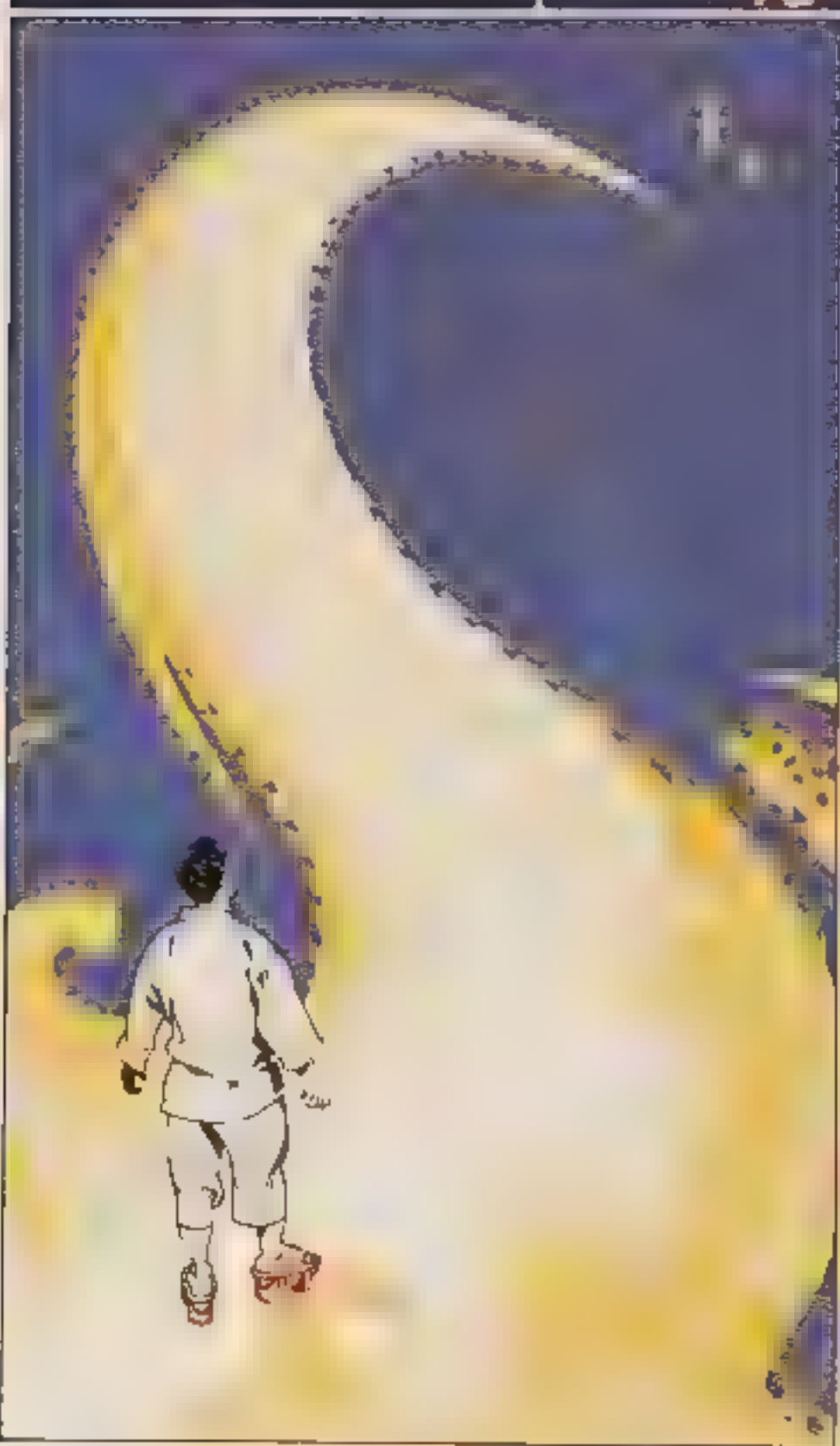
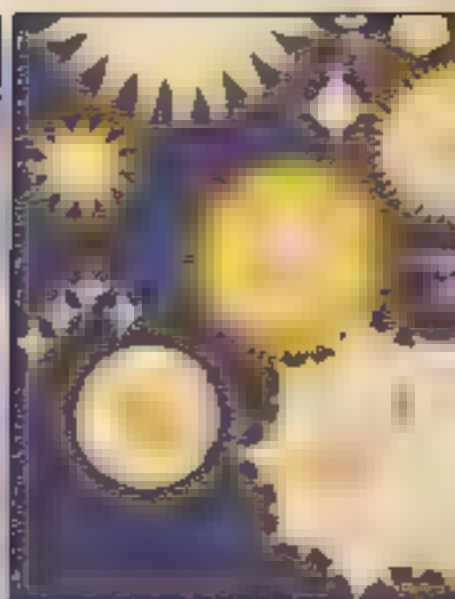
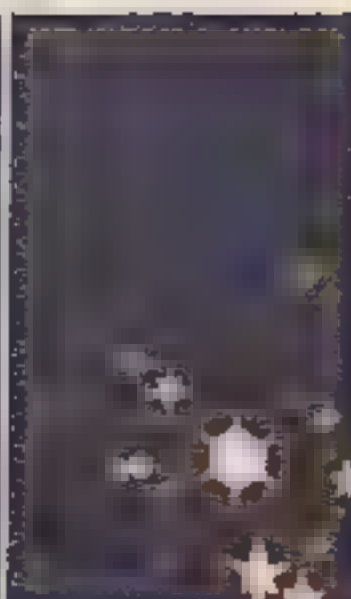
THE FOX SLEPT
LIKE A DEAD THING
SHE WAS SO SMALL
THE MONK RAN HIS
HAND ALONG THE
SOFTNESS OF
HER FUR

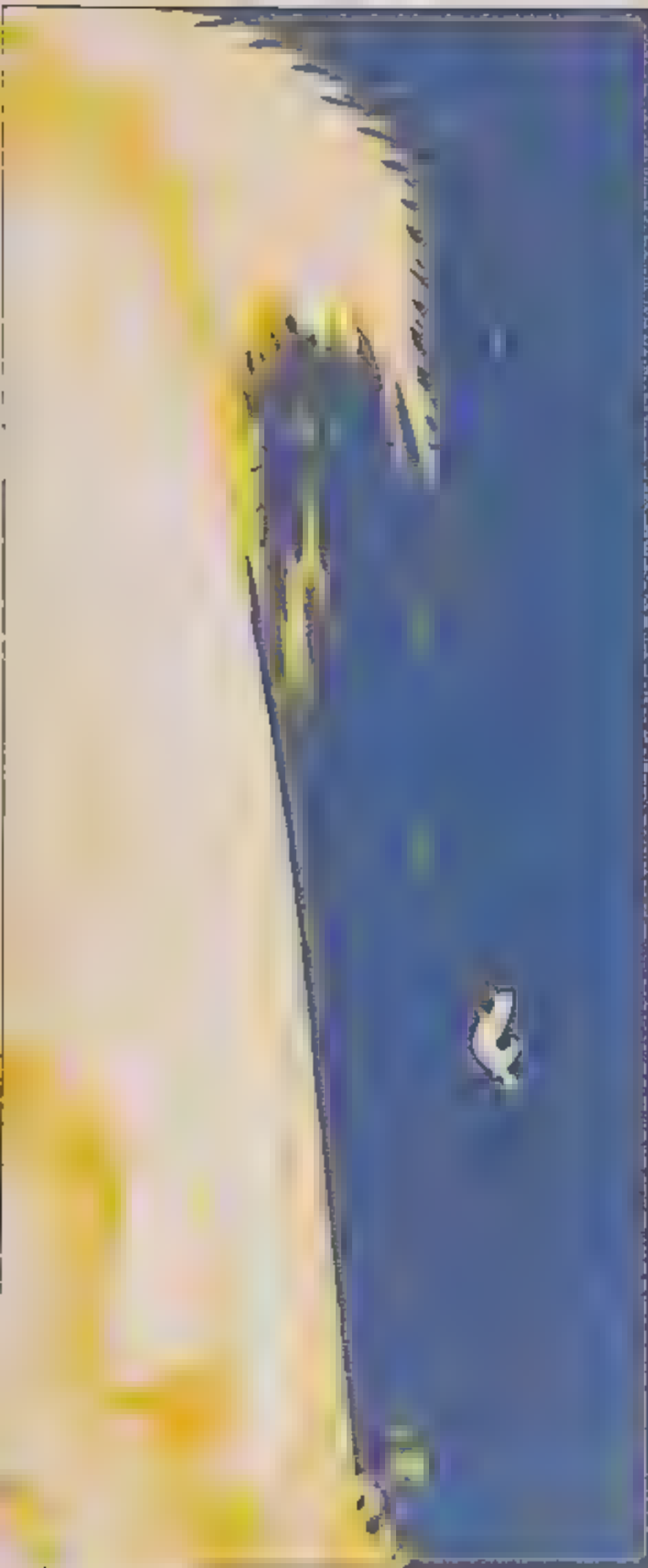
THEN HE INSPECTED THE STRIP OF PARCHMENT
THAT BINZARU HAGA'DA HAD GIVEN HIM. HE
COULD NOT READ WHAT WAS WRITTEN THERE.
THE CHARACTERS SEEMED TO TWIST AND
SHIMMER, LIKE CHARACTERS IN A DREAM.

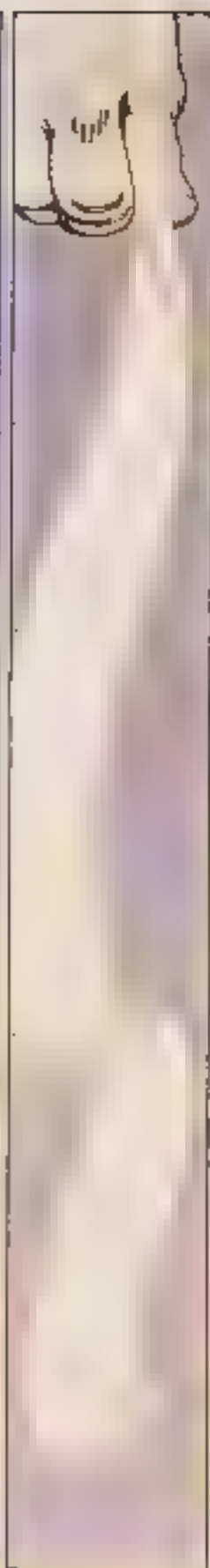
HE PUT
THE FOX IN
HIS ROBE TO
KEEP HER WARM
AND PERHAPS
KEEP HER
ALIVE

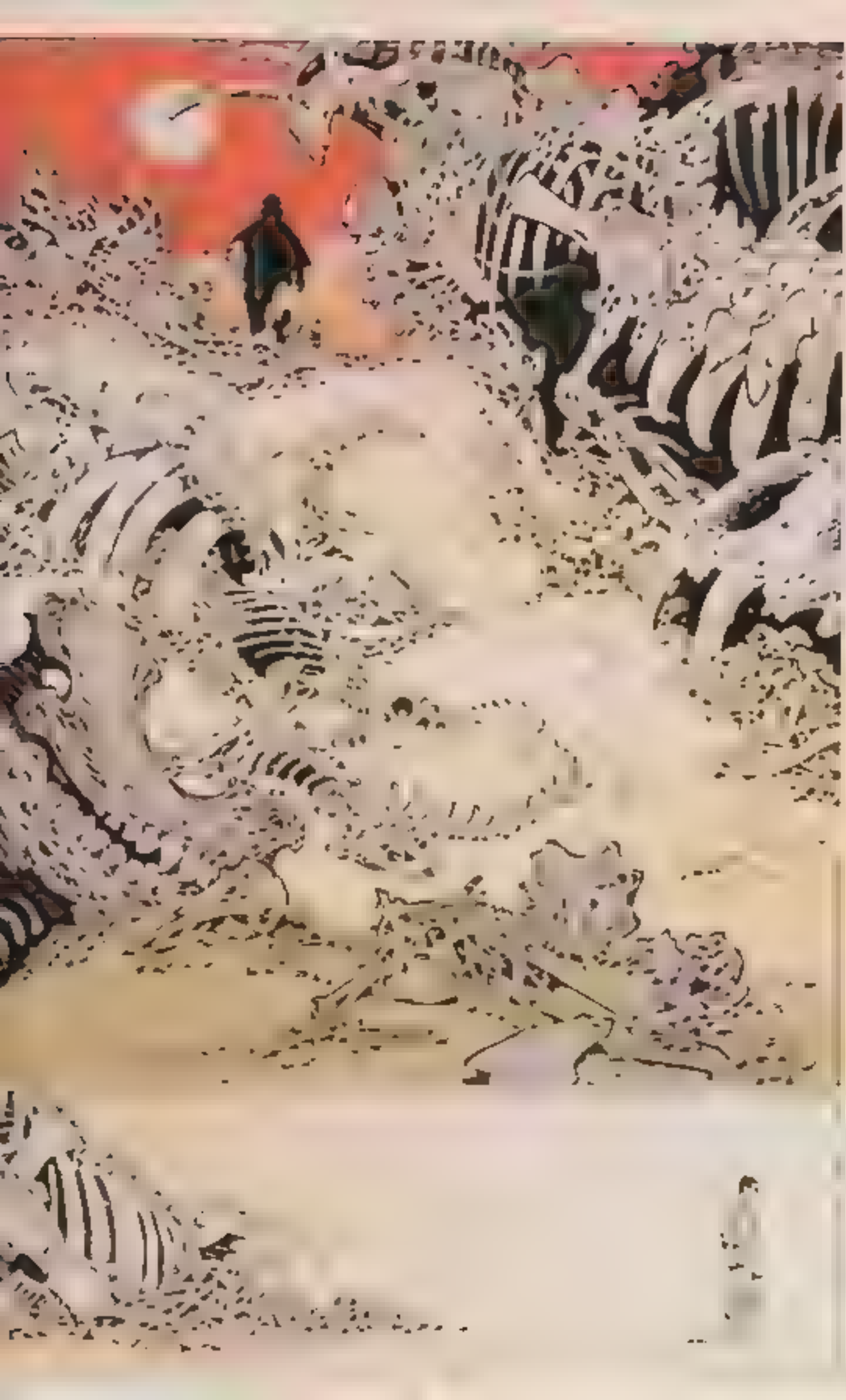
HE PALED THE
SLIP OF PAPER
BENEATH HIS
HEAD AND WROTE
OUT FROM HIS
WALK FIRST
DOWN THE
MOUNTAIN AND
THEN UP THE
MOUNTAIN

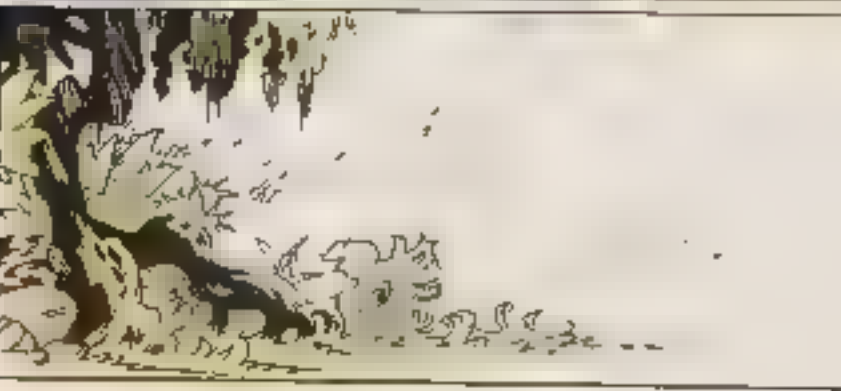
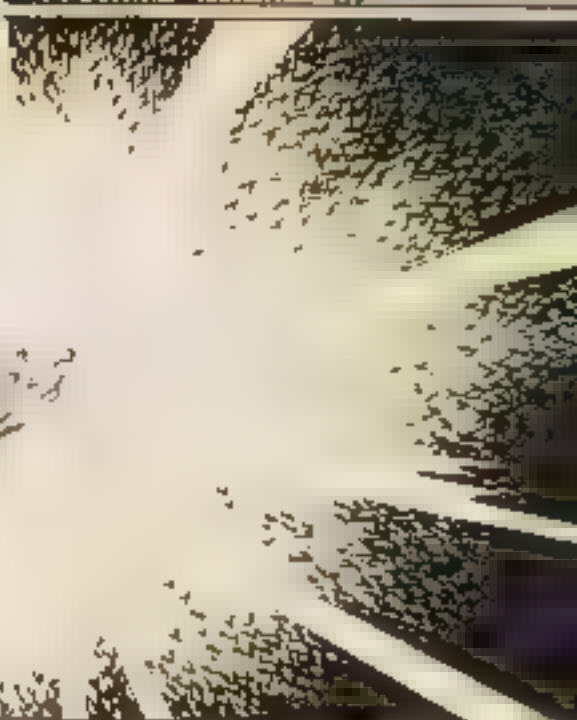
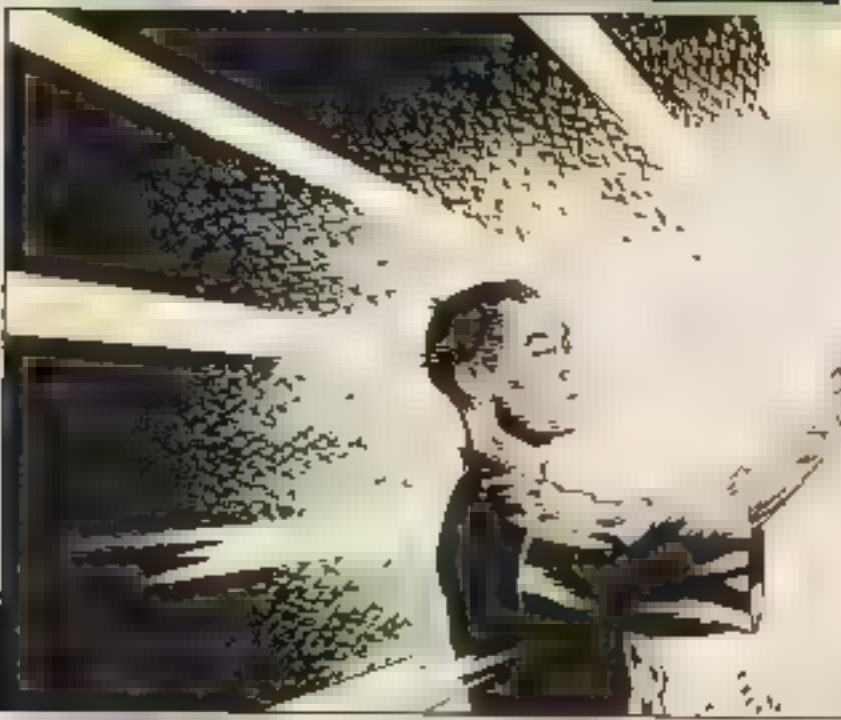
HE
SLEPT

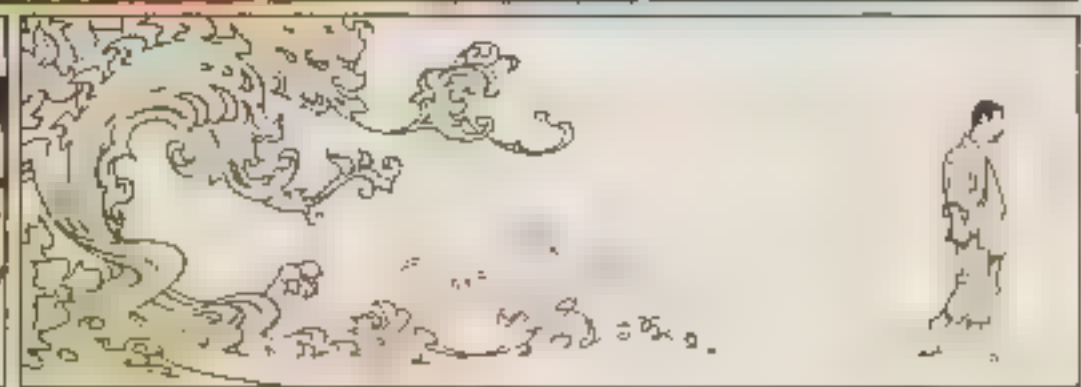
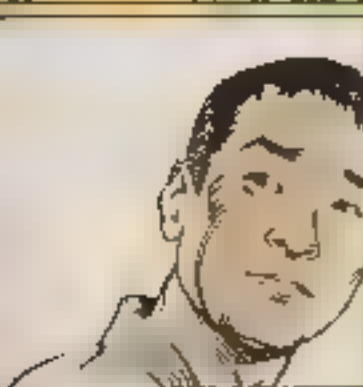
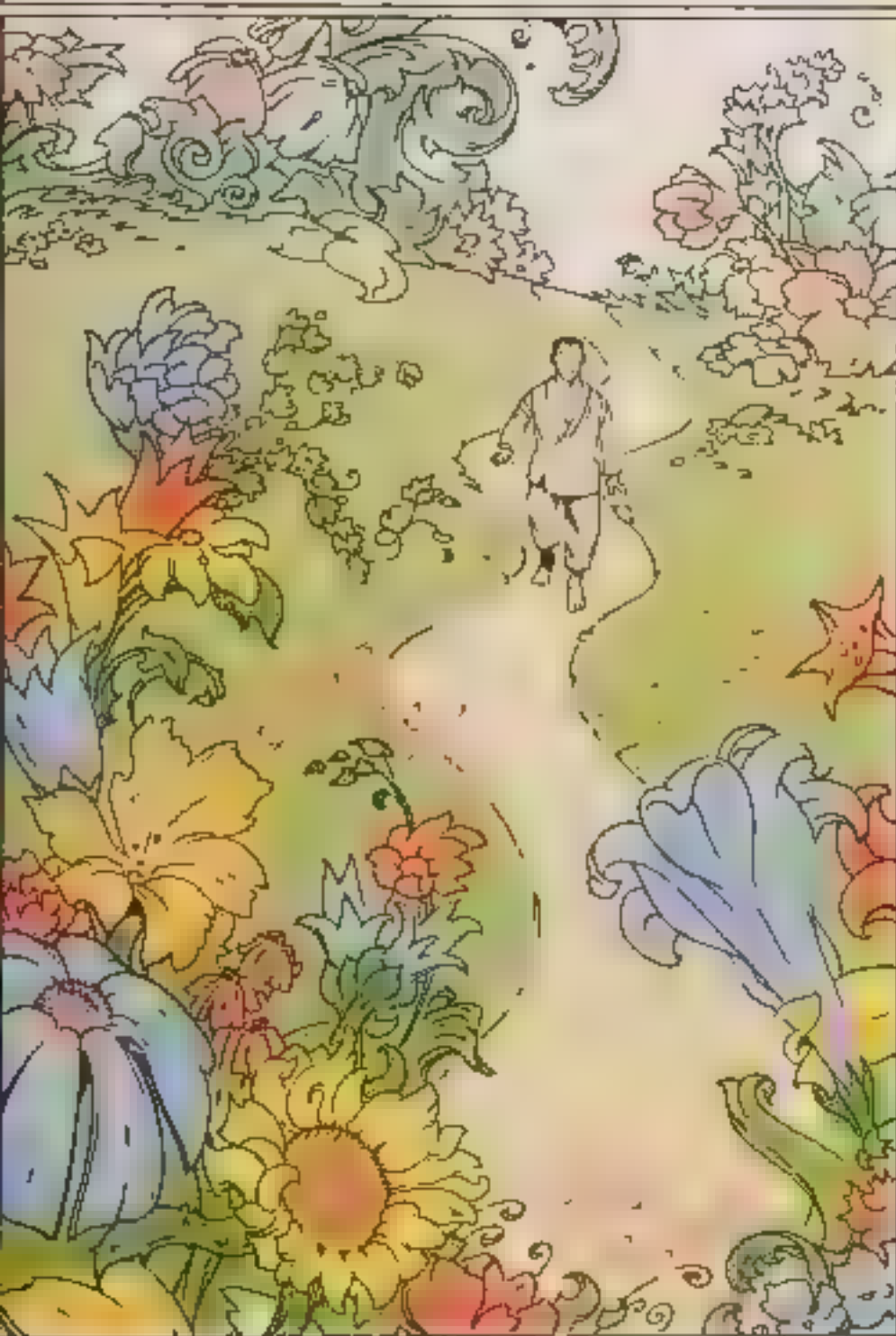
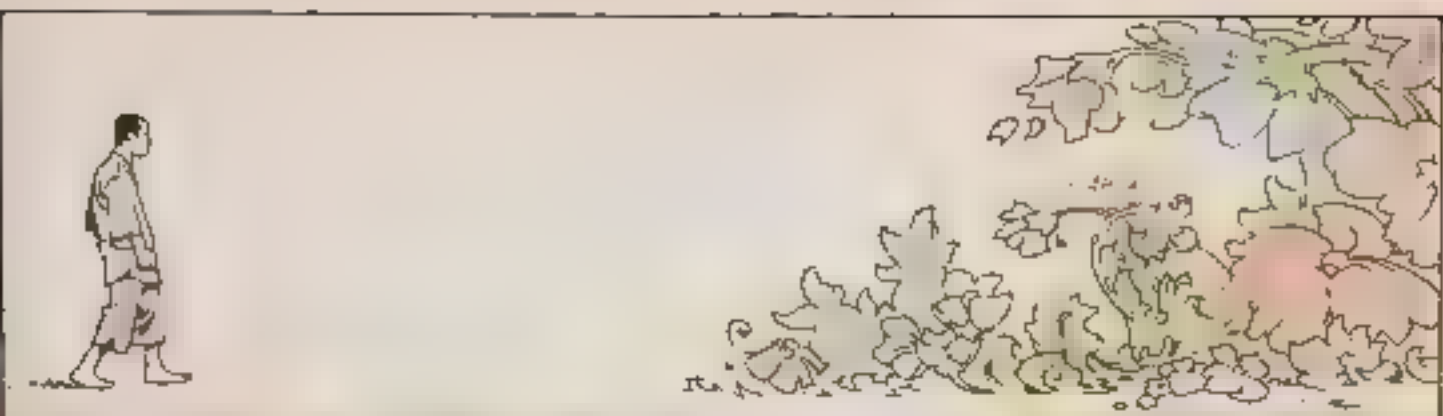










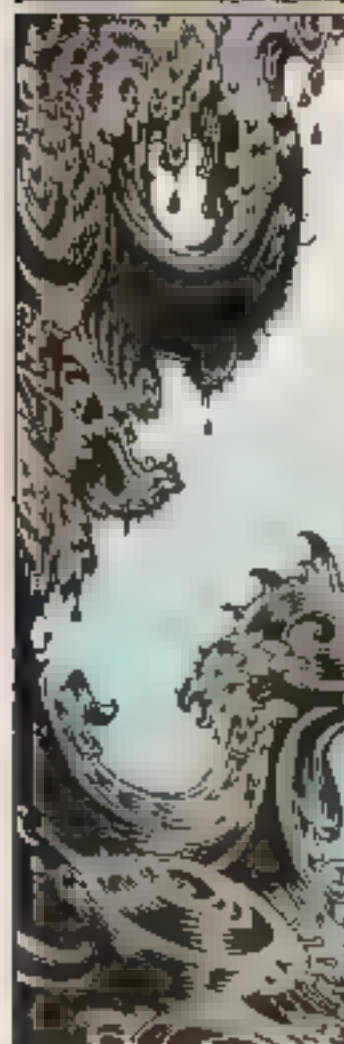




"SEEK THE KING OF DREAMS AM I GOING THE RIGHT WAY?"



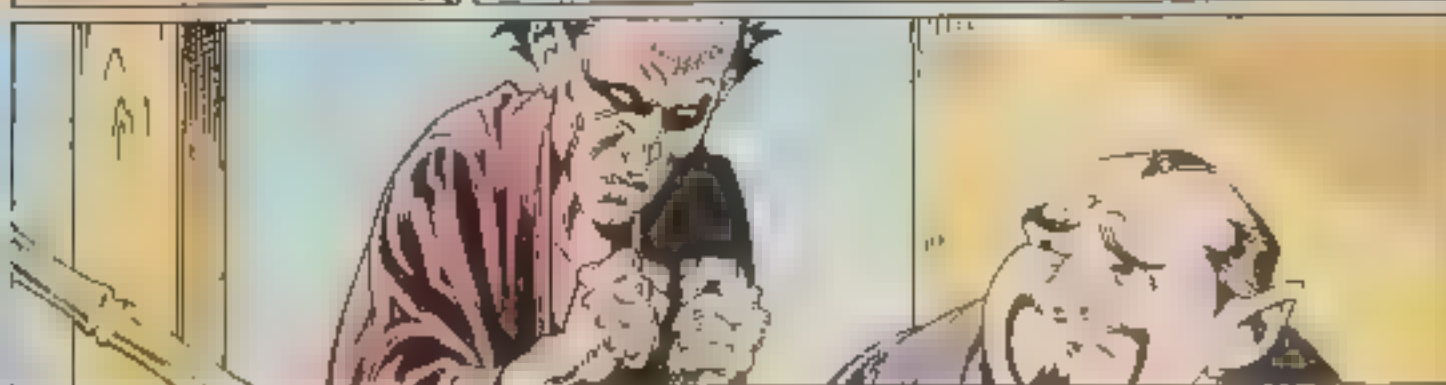
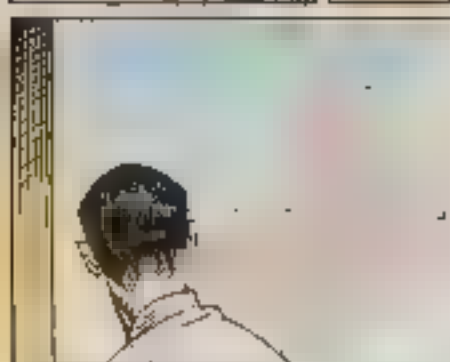
HOW CAN YOU **NOT** GO TO HIM WHEN ALL THE WAYS ARE HIS?"

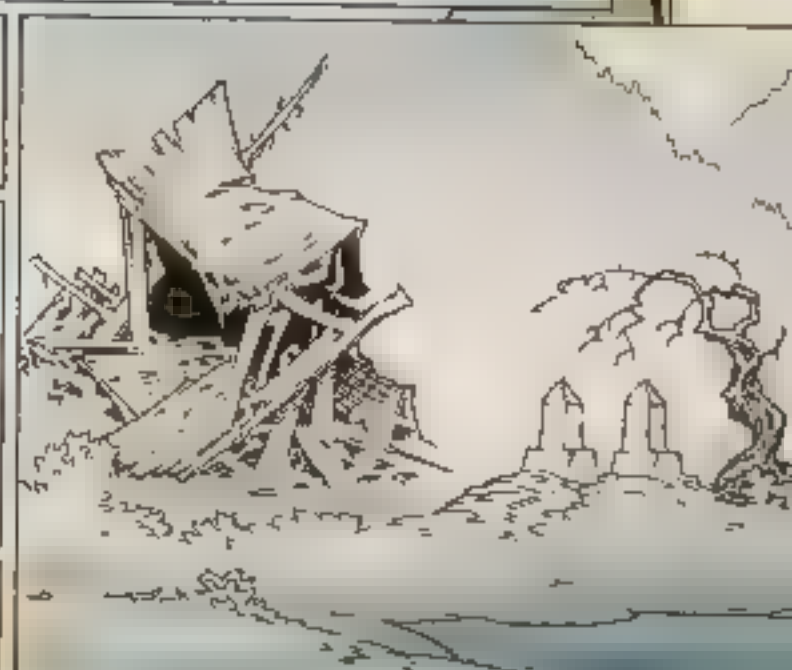
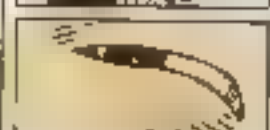
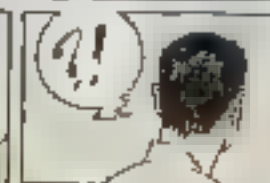
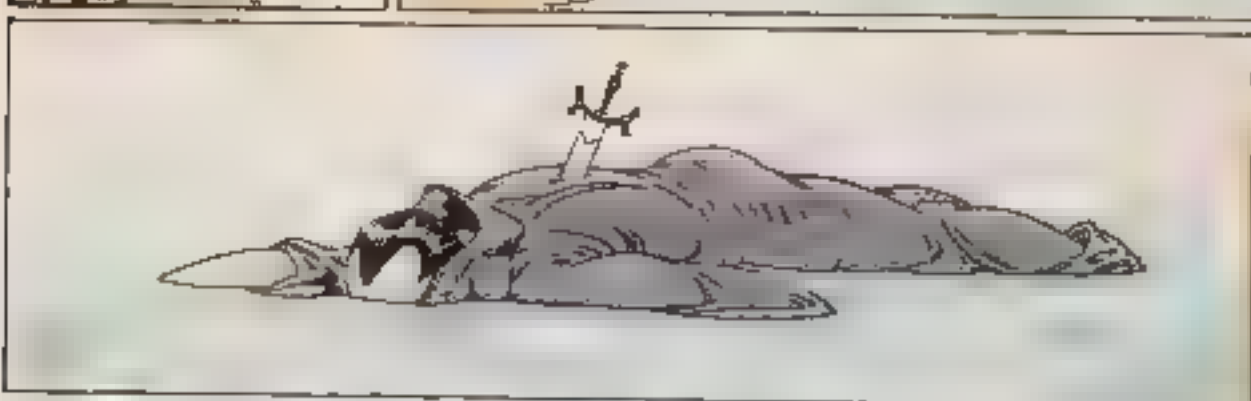
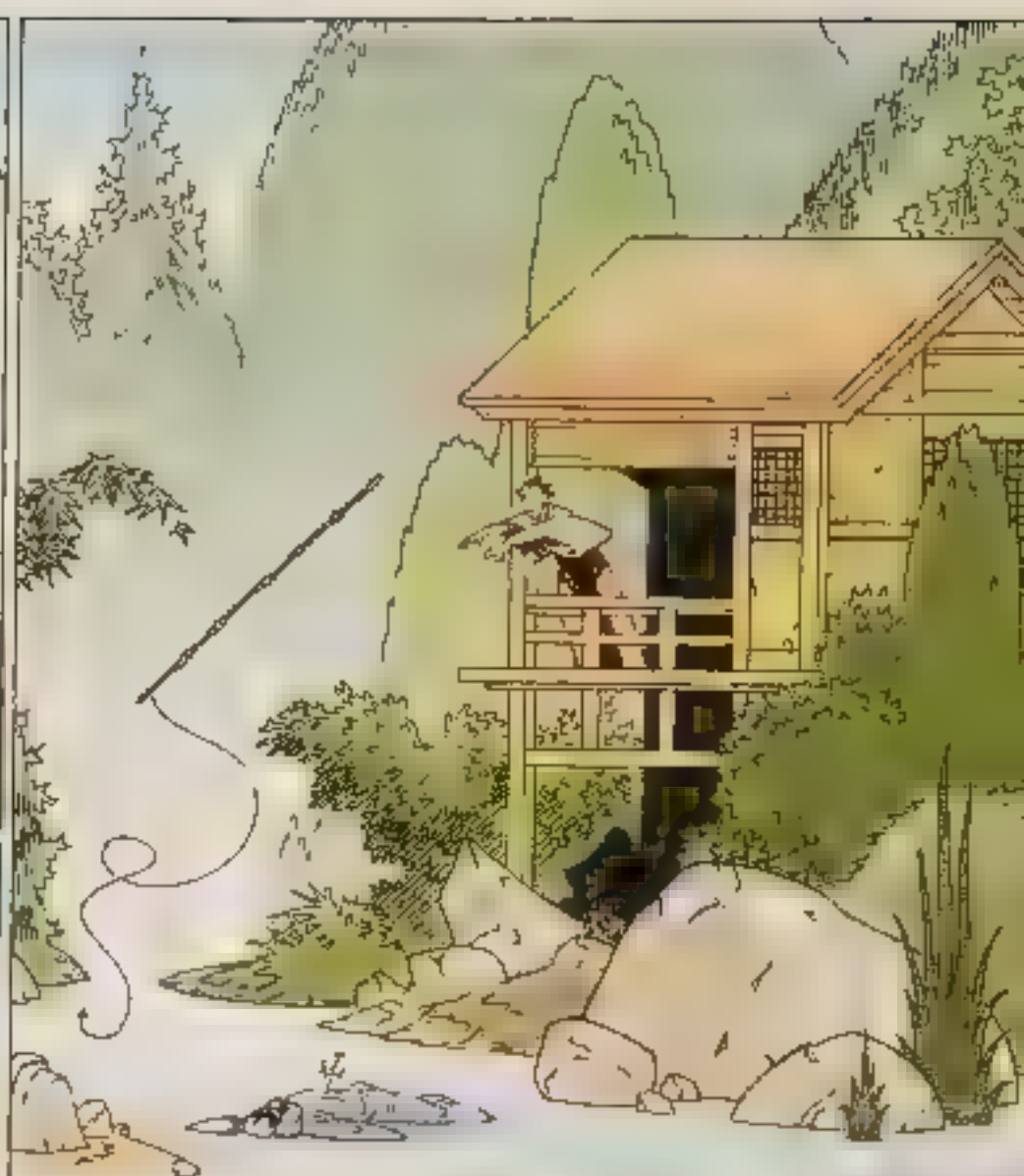


THE MONK UNFOLDED HIS TOKEN TO SHOW IT TO THEM AND IT WAS THEN THAT HE KNEW FOR CERTAIN HE WAS DREAMING. FOR HE COULD READ THE CHARACTERS ON THE PAPER HE CARRIED

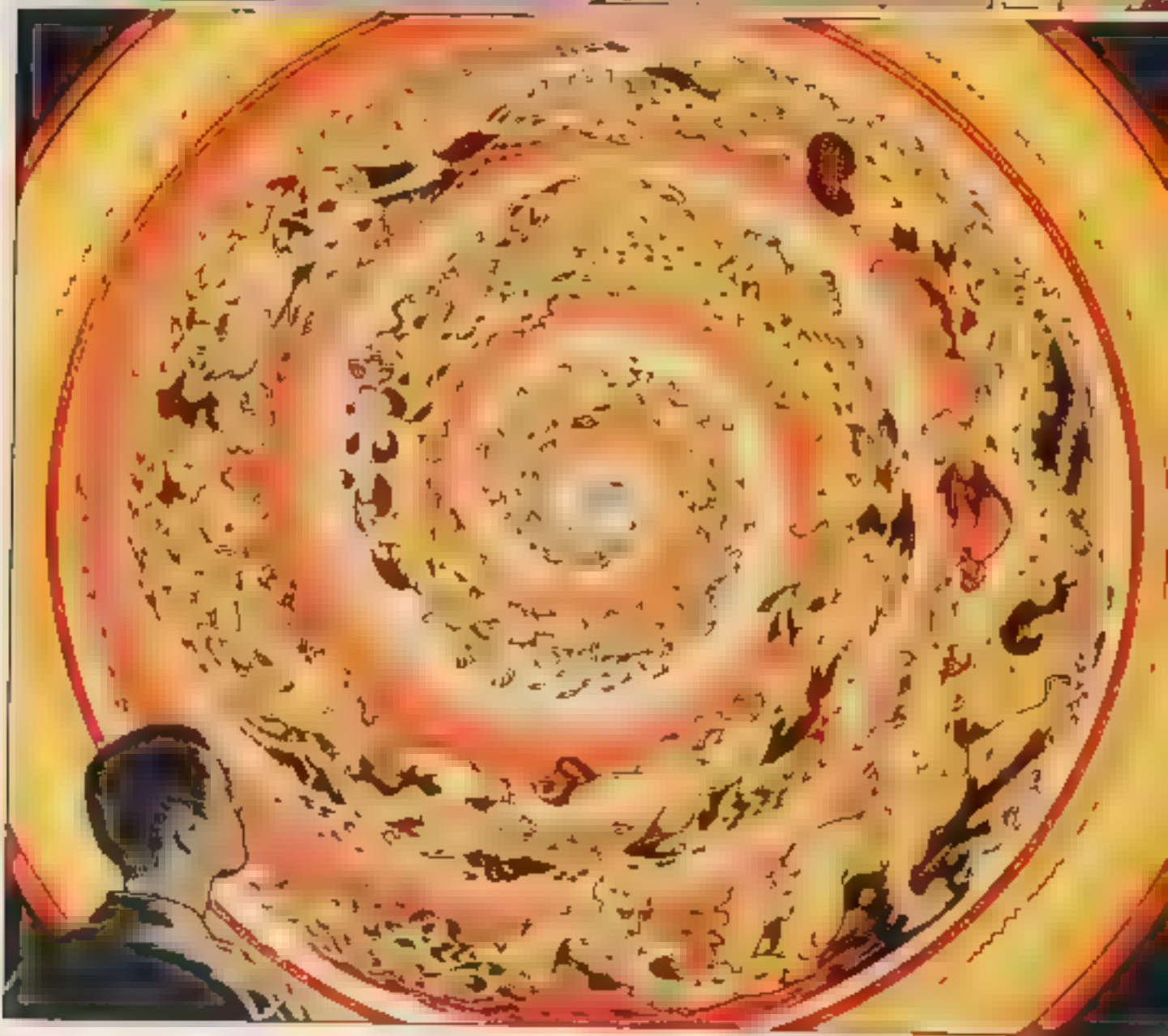
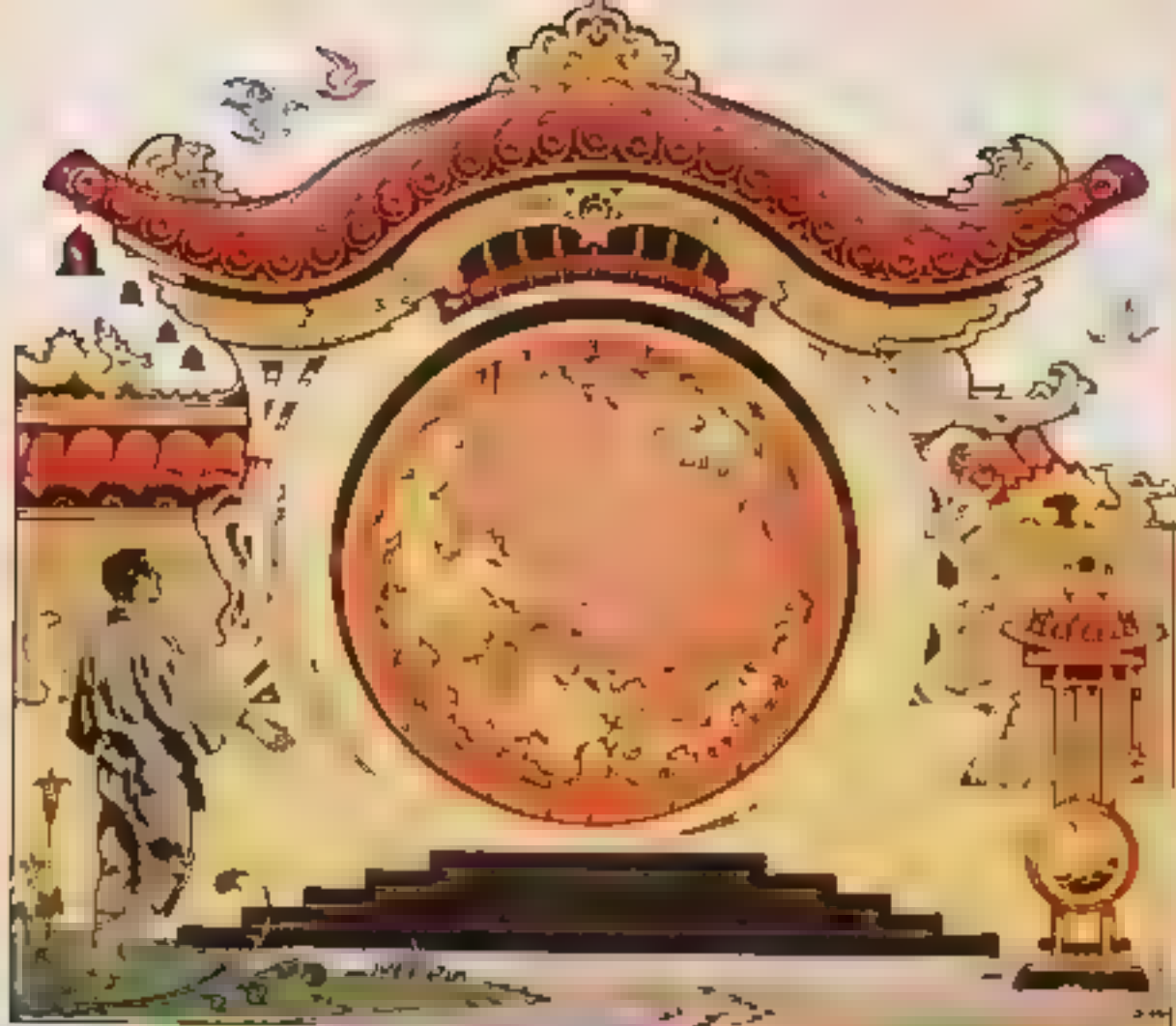
THEY WERE SIMPLE CHARACTERS AND THEY DESCRIBED ONE WHO TRANSMUTE THINGS FROM FORMLESSNESS AND SHAPELESSNESS INTO THAT WHICH WAS NOT REAL BUT WITHOUT WHICH THE REAL WOULD HAVE NO MEANING

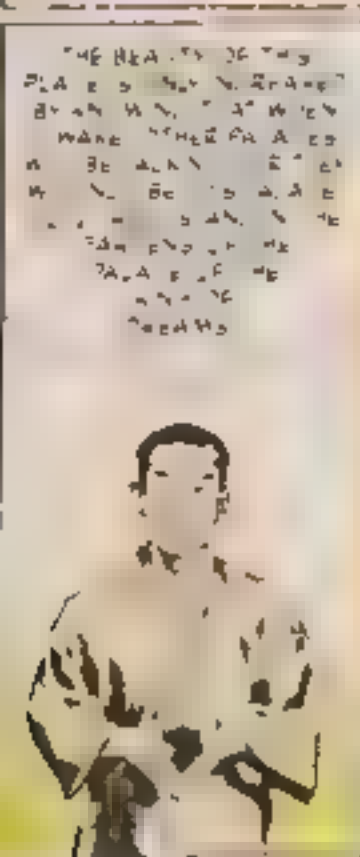


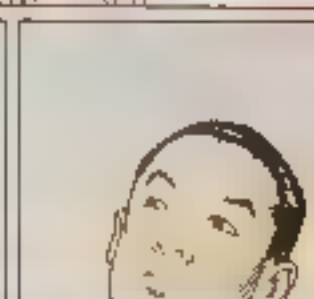
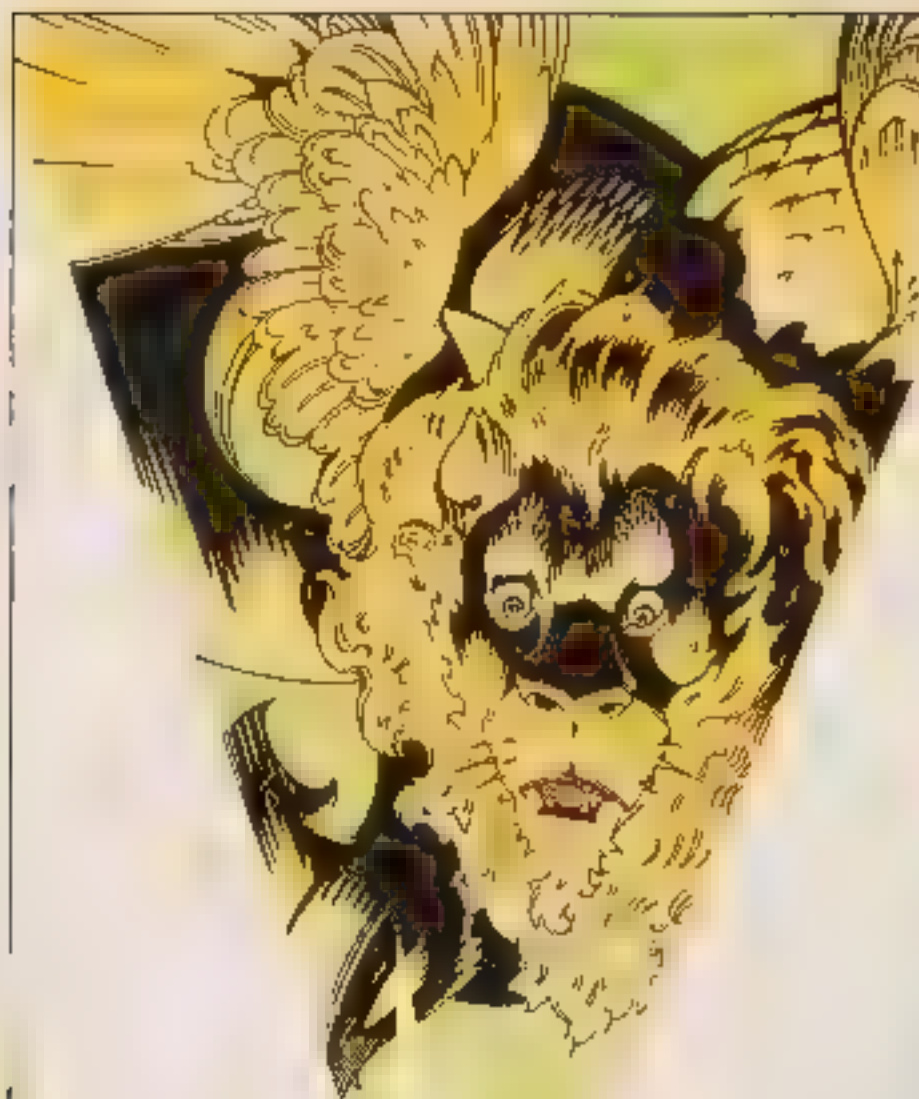


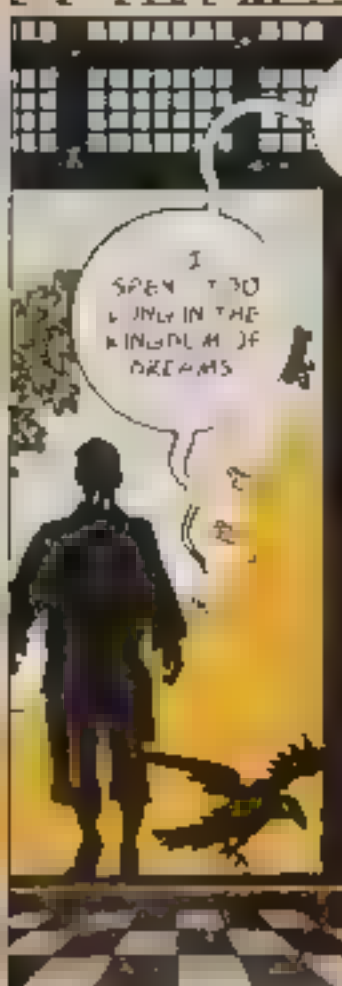
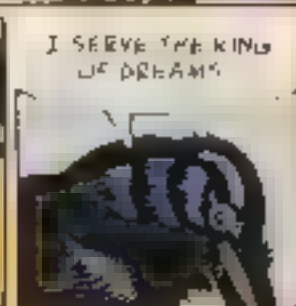
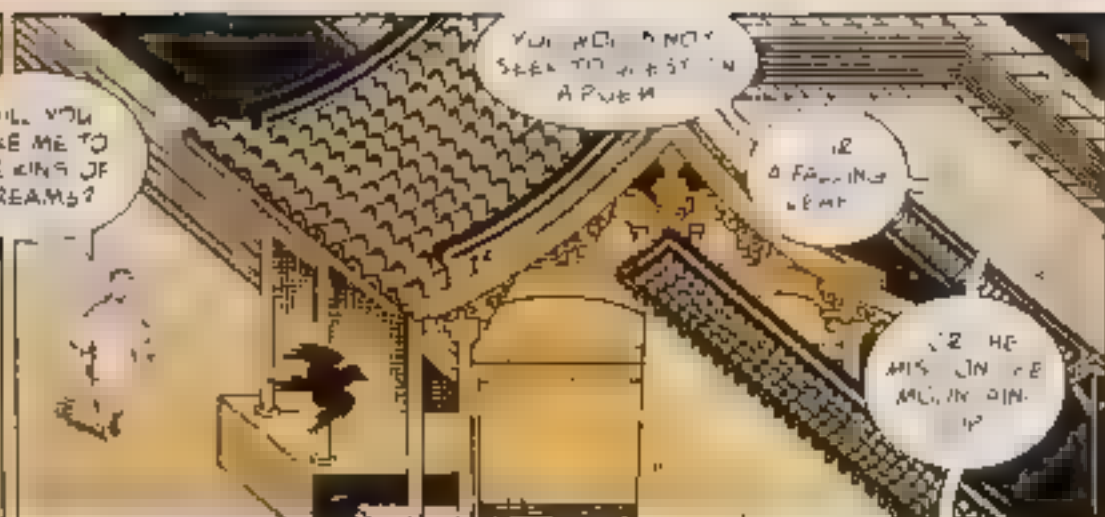












THE MONK
STOOD
NERVOUSLY
IN THE
THRONE
ROOM, AND
HE WAITED
FOR THE
ARRIVAL OF
THE KING OF
DREAMS.



IN THE MONK'S MASI-
NATION, THE KING OF DREAMS
BECAME AN OLD MAN
WITH A LONG BEARD AND
FINGERNAILS



AND THEN HE LOOKED
LIKE THE BUDDHA AMIDA



AND THEN HE BECAME
A DEMON, HALF MAN AND
HALF DRAGON



HIS
EYE WAS
CAUGHT BY
THE PAINTED
SCREENS THAT
BOUNDED THE
ROOM.

AS LONG
AS HE
LOOKED
AT THEM
THEY RE-
MAINED
FROZEN
AND
STILL.

BUT WHEN
HE TOOK HIS
EYES AWAY
AND LOOKED
BACK

HE
WOULD
SEE
THINGS
HE HAD
NOT
SEEN
BEFORE.
REA-
TURES
WOULD
HAVE
MOVED
WHEN HE
LOOKED
AWAY.

ONE MOMENT HE THOUGHT
HE WAS ALONE

AND THEN

MY
LORD.

You are
welcome in
this place.
But you
should not
be here.

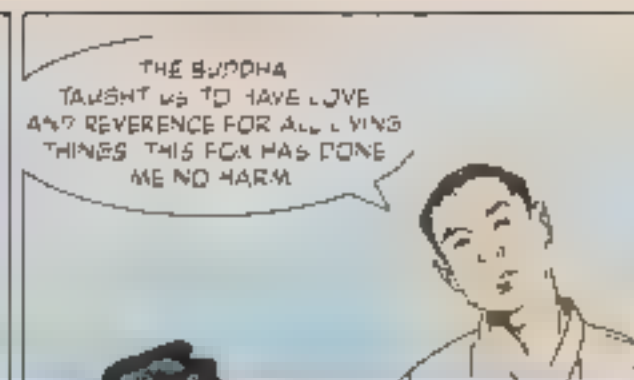
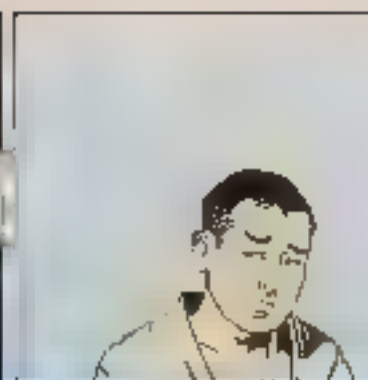
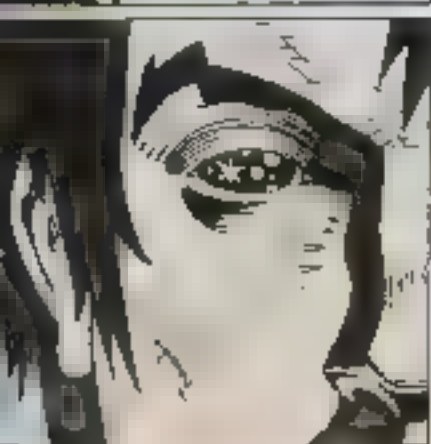
HAVE
COME TO PLEAD
FOR THE LIFE OF A
FOX WHO'S IN MY
WORLD LOST IN
DREAMS WITHOUT
YOUR AID, SHE
WILL
PERISH.



And perhaps
that is what she
wants. To be
lost in
dreams.



Certainly she has a reason
for what she has done, and
it is a reason you know little
of. Besides, she is a fox.
What is her name?

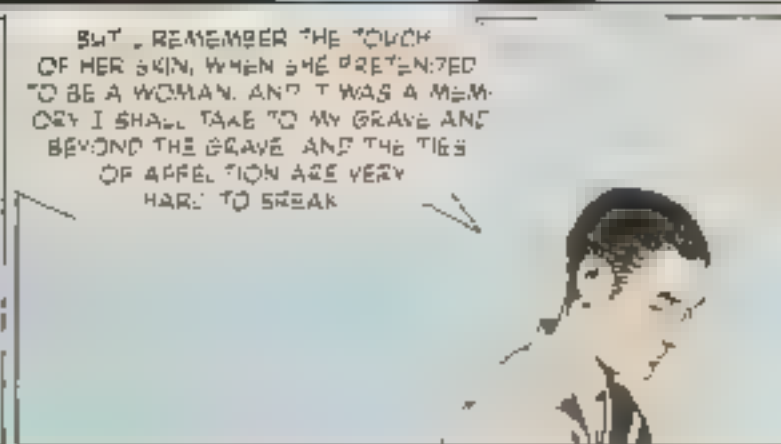
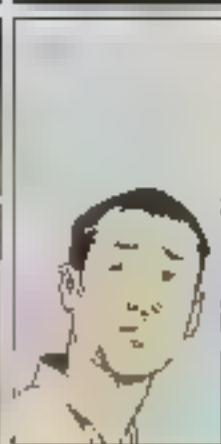
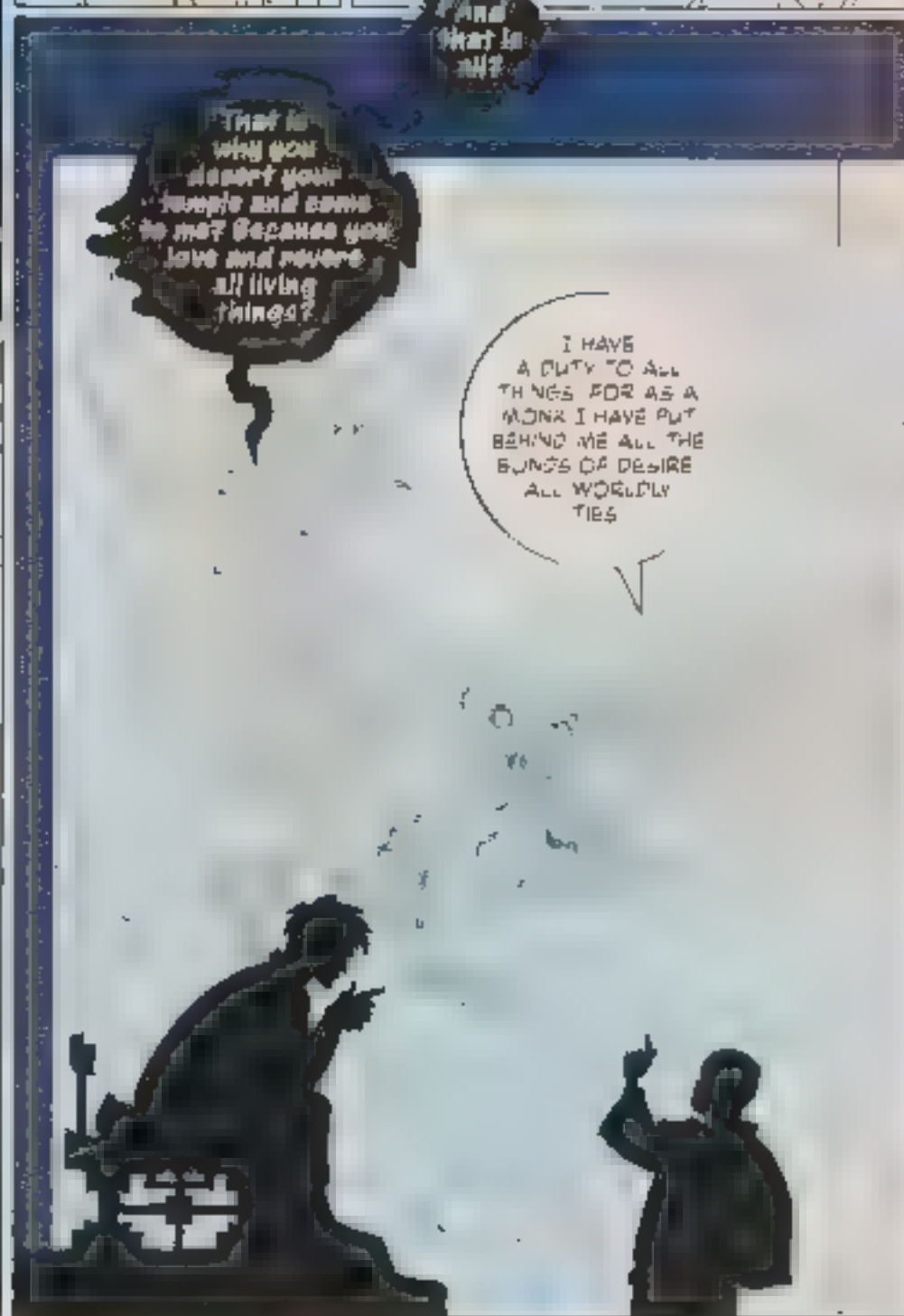


THE BUDDHA
TAUGHT US TO HAVE LOVE
AND REVERENCE FOR ALL LIVING
THINGS. THIS FOX HAS DONE
ME NO HARM.

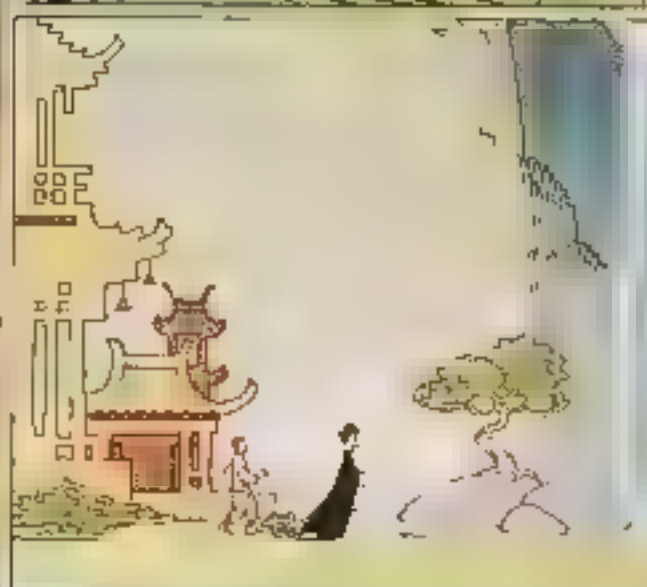
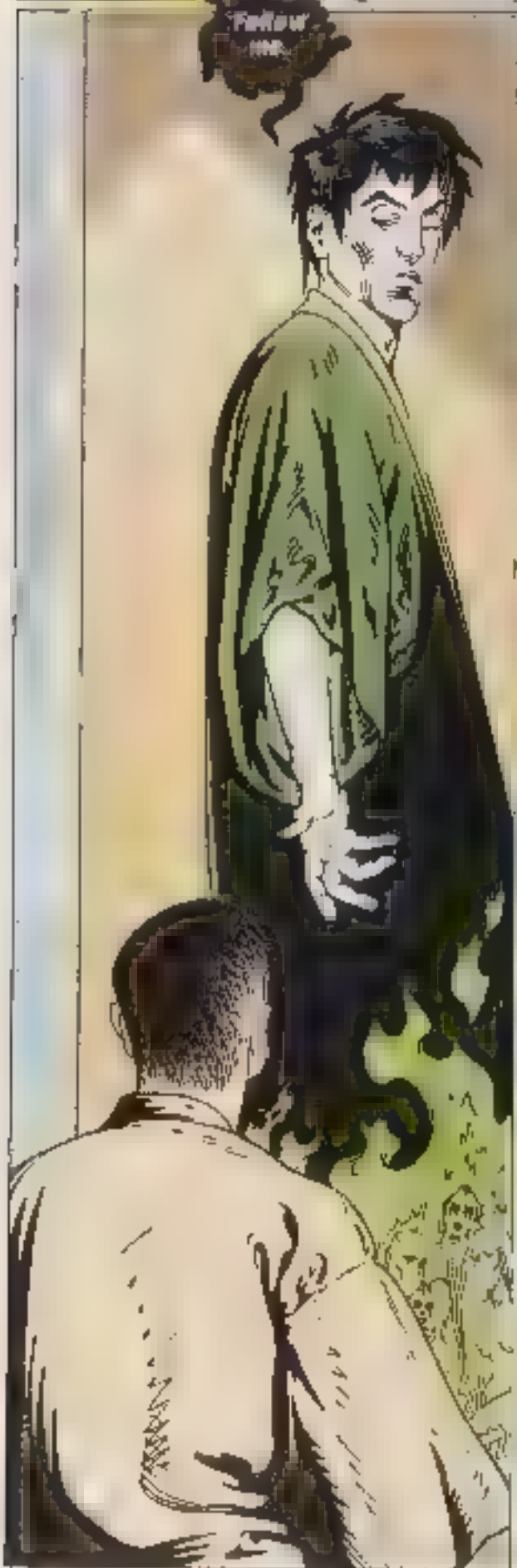
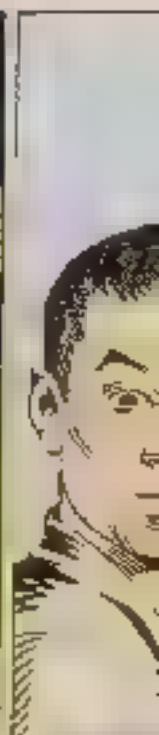
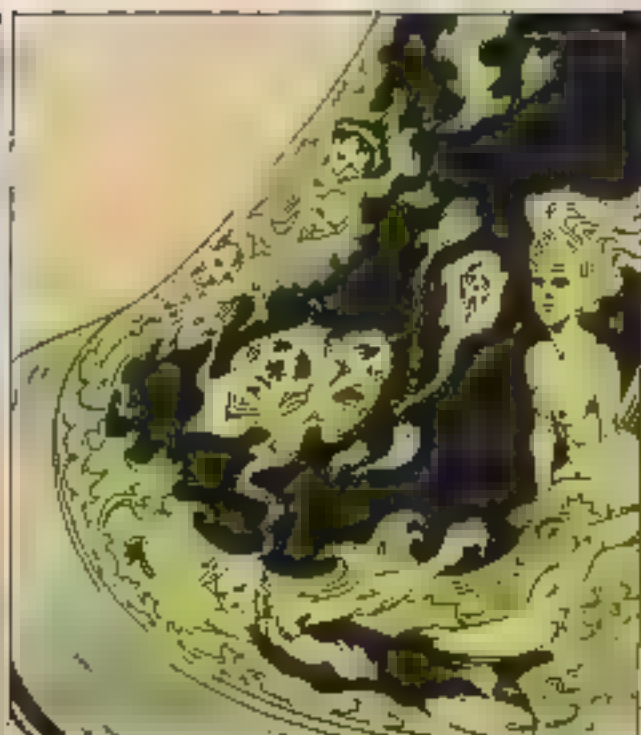
And
that is
all?

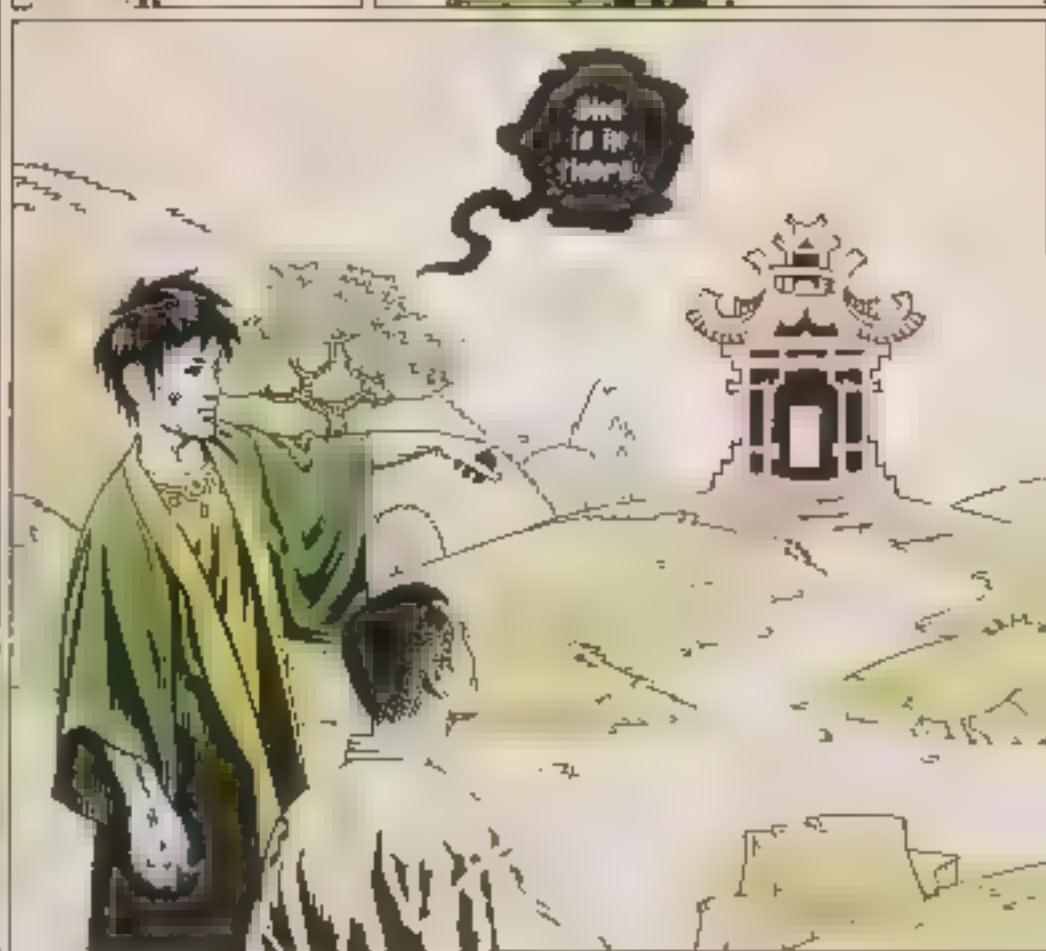
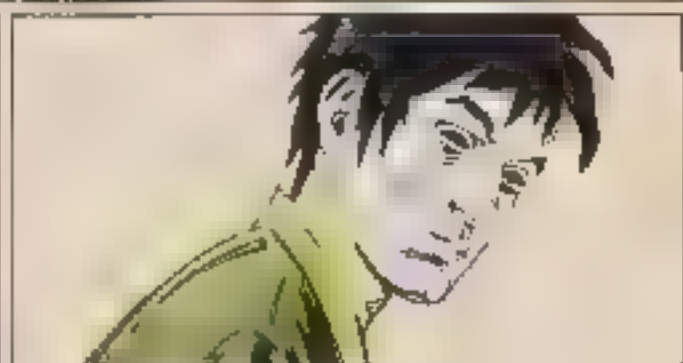
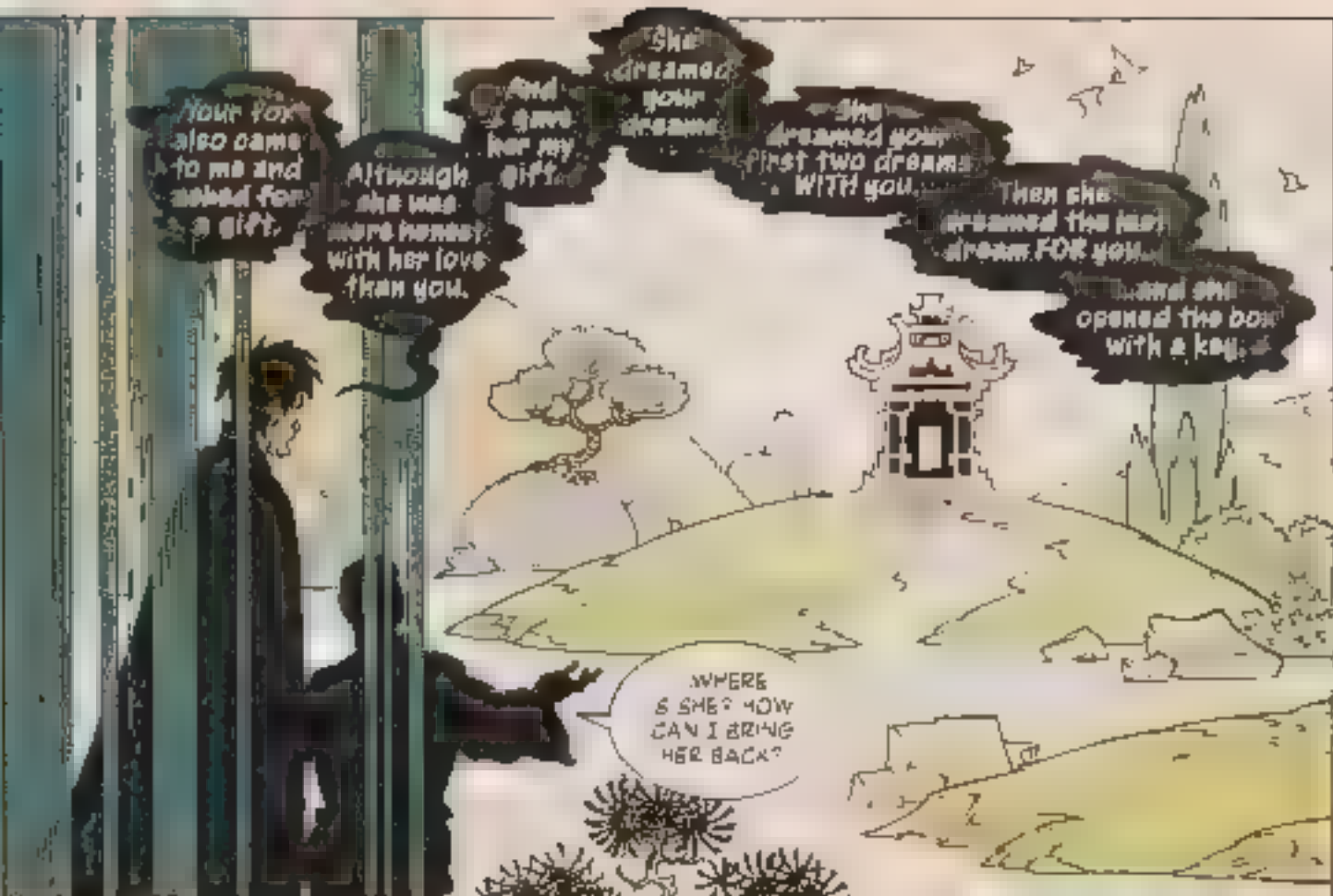
That is
why you
desert your
temple and come
to me? Because you
love and revere
all living
things?

I HAVE
A DUTY TO ALL
THINGS. FOR AS A
MONK I HAVE PUT
BEHIND ME ALL THE
BUNDS OF DESIRE
ALL WORLDLY
TIES.



BUT I REMEMBER THE TOUCH
OF HER SKIN, WHEN SHE PRETENDED
TO BE A WOMAN. AND IT WAS A MEM-
ORY I SHALL TAKE TO MY GRAVE AND
BEYOND THE GRAVE. AND THE TIES
OF AFFECTION ARE VERY
HARD TO BREAK.

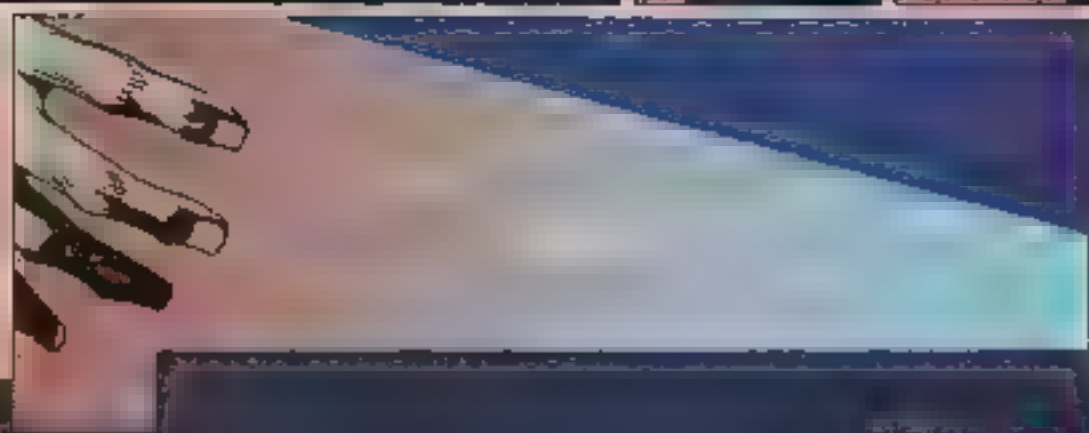
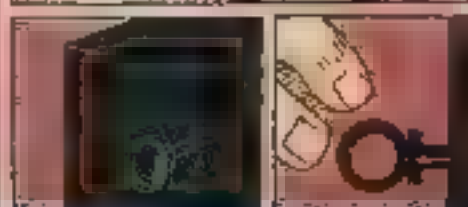
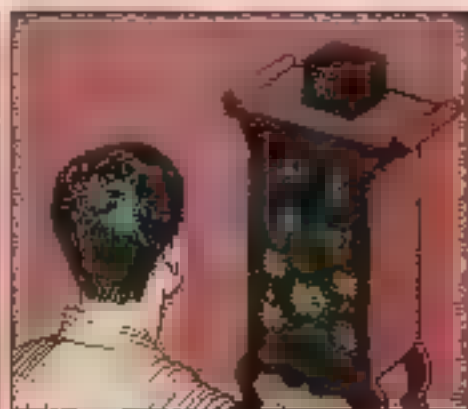
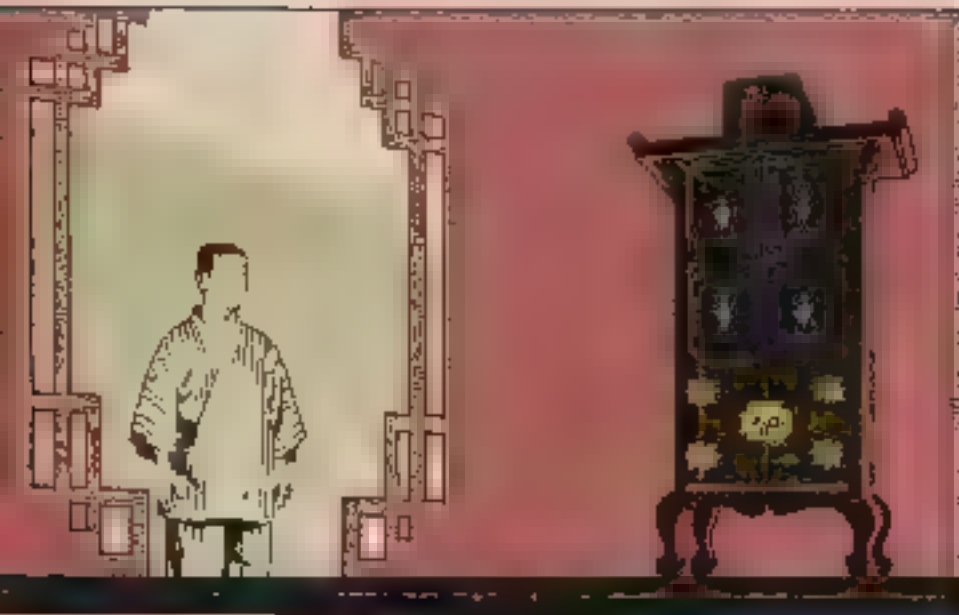




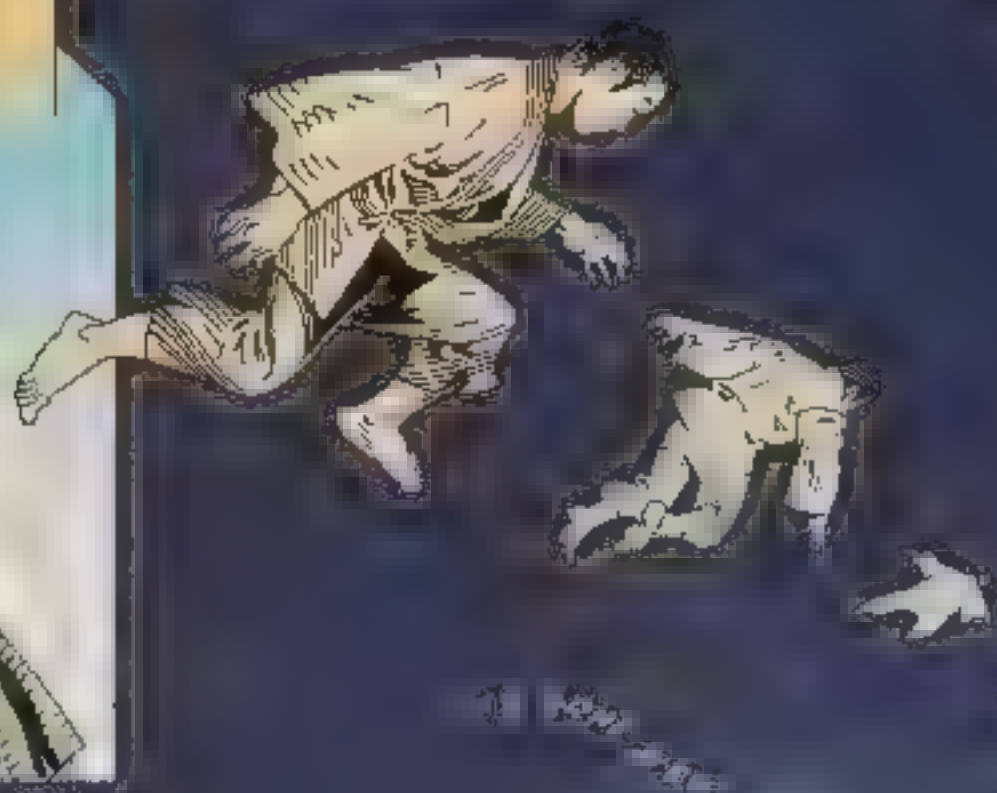
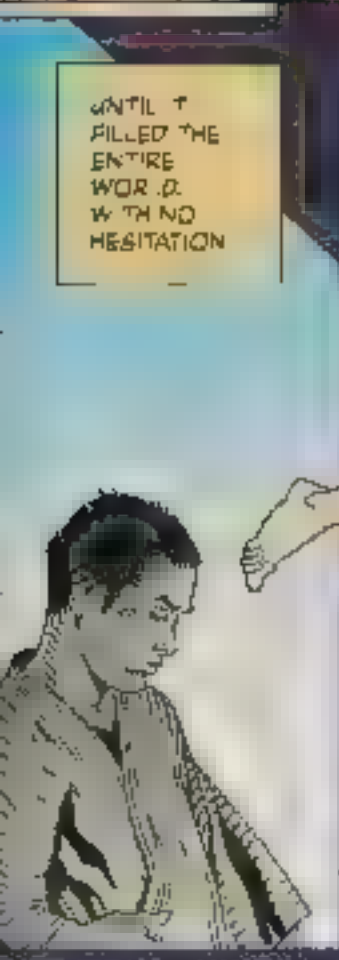
「...」

「...」

「...」



UNTIL I
FILLED THE
ENTIRE
WORLD
WITH NO
HESITATION



AT FIRST IT SEEMED TO THE MONK
THAT THE INSIDE OF THE LACQUER
BOX WAS A FAMILIAR PLACE THAT

HE HAD SEEN BEFORE



PERHAPS HIS ROOM AS A BOY,
OR A SECRET ROOM IN THE TEMPLE
THAT HAD REMAINED HIDDEN UNTIL
THIS MOMENT.



THERE WAS
NOTHING IN
THE ROOM BUT
A MIRROR IN
THE CORNER



ON THE BACK OF THE MIRROR WAS A
PAINTING OF TWO MEN: ONE WAS A
FIERCE PROUD MAN, THE OTHER WAS
THE MONK HIMSELF, COVERED WITH
STAINS AND MOLD



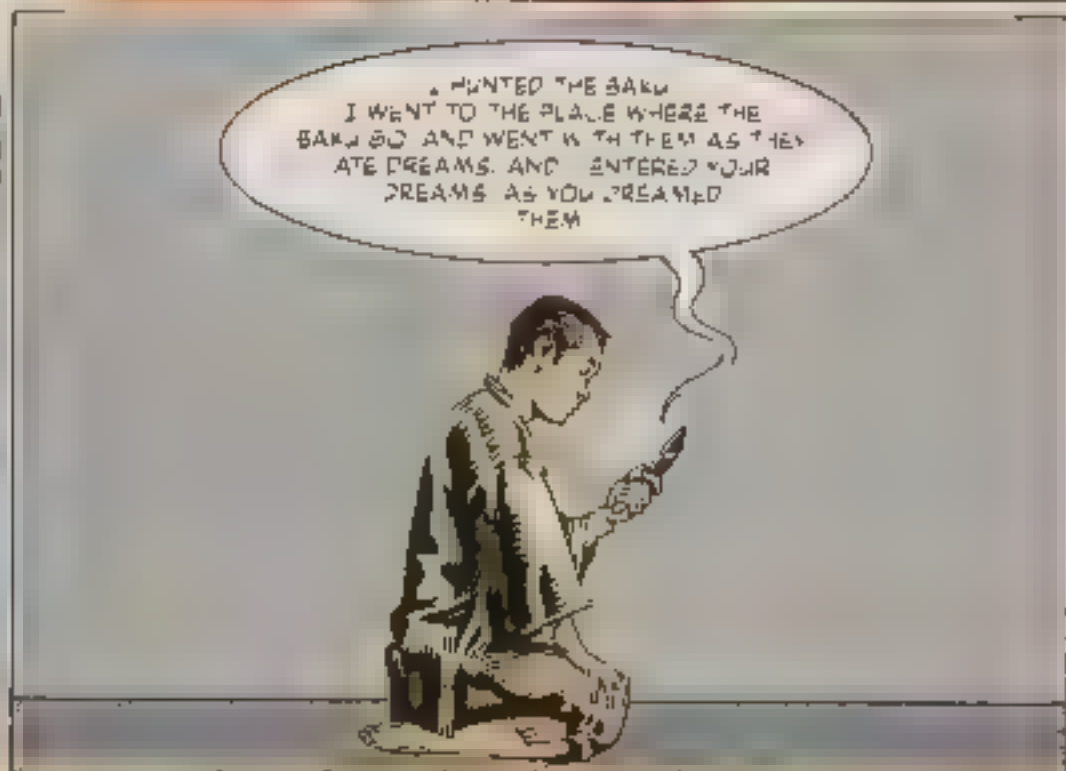
WHY
DID YOU
COME HERE?
- SAVE MY
LIFE FOR
YOU.



YOU WERE ASLEEP AT THE
DOOR OF THE THRESHOLD I
COULD NOT WAKE YOU



I HUNTED THE BAKU
I WENT TO THE PLACE WHERE THE
BAKU GO AND WENT WITH THEM AS THEY
ATE DREAMS. AND ENTERED YOUR
DREAMS AS YOU DREAMED
THEM



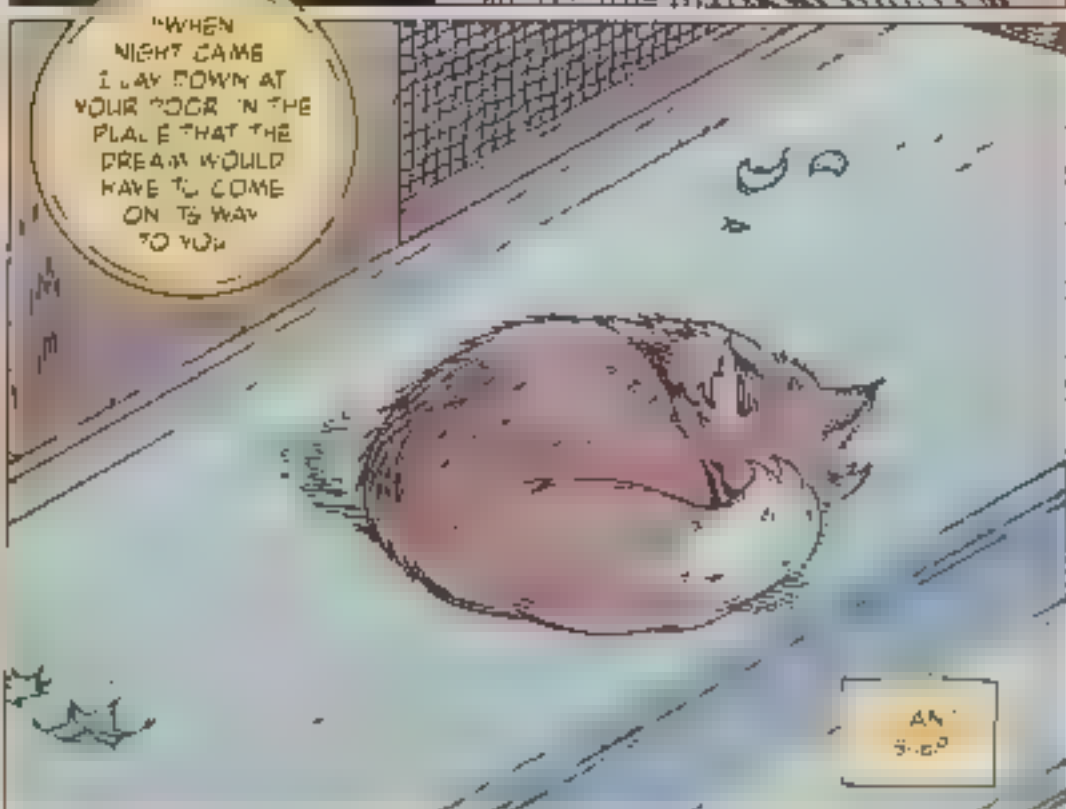
I WAS THERE WHEN
YOUR FATHER GAVE
YOU THE CHEST AND
AS YOU WOKE I KEPT
THE CHEST.



"...AND WHEN YOUR
GRANDFATHER GAVE
YOU THE KEY I TOOK
IT FROM YOU AS
YOU WOKE



"WHEN
NIGHT CAME
I LAY DOWN AT
YOUR DOOR IN THE
PLACE THAT THE
DREAM WOULD
HAVE TO COME
ON ITS WAY
TO YOU



AN
3-50

I SAW THE DREAM
SLIPPING THROUGH
THE DARKNESS

" AND I
SPRANG
UPON IT
AND MADE
IT MY OWN.

"AND IN MY DREAM
I OPENED THE CHEST WITH A
KEY, AND IT OPENED, HUGE AS THE SKY,

AND I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO ENTER.

"AND THEN I WAS VERY
AFRAID, FOR I WAS LOST IN
THIS BOX AND I COULD NOT
FIND MY WAY OUT AGAIN.
I HAD LOST THE PATH THAT
WOULD TAKE ME BACK TO
MY BODY. I WAS SAD AND
SCARED, BUT I WAS ALSO
PROUD, FOR I KNEW THAT
I HAD SAVED YOUR LIFE."

WHY
WOULD YOU
DO THIS FOR
ME?

WHY DID
YOU SEARCH
ME OUT? WHY
DID YOU COME
HERE?



BE-
CAUSE
I CARE
FOR
YOU.



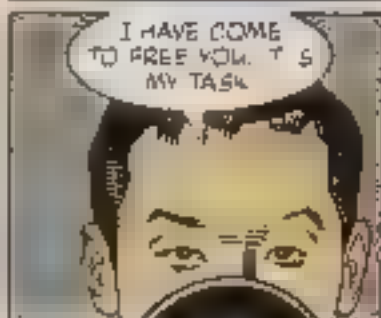
THEN NOW YOU HAVE
COME HERE AND NOW YOU HAVE
EARNED THE TRUTH. YOU MUST
KNOW THAT T'S TIME FOR
YOU TO LEAVE

I
HAVE
SAVED
YOUR
LIFE

THE ONAWOJI WHO
S YOUR ENEMY WILL DIE AND
YOU CAN RETURN TO YOUR TEMPLE
GROW YOUR SILLY DRY VAMS, AND.
WHEN T'S APPROPRIATE, SAY
A PRAYER FOR ME



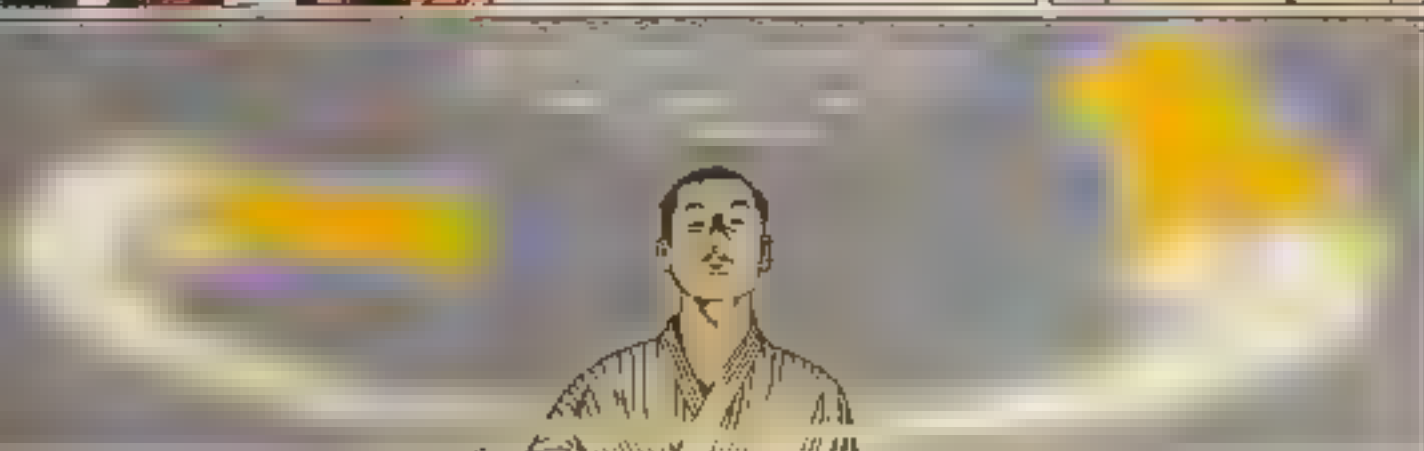
I HAVE COME
TO FREE YOU. T'S
MY TASK



AND
HOW WOULD
YOU FREE ME?
CAN YOU BREAK
THE METAL
OF THE
MIRROR?



NO.
I CAN
NOT



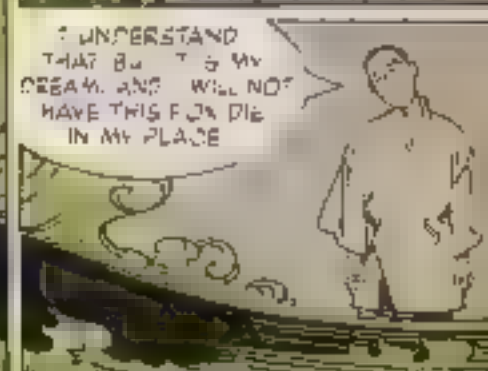


Well,
are you
ready to
leave this
place?

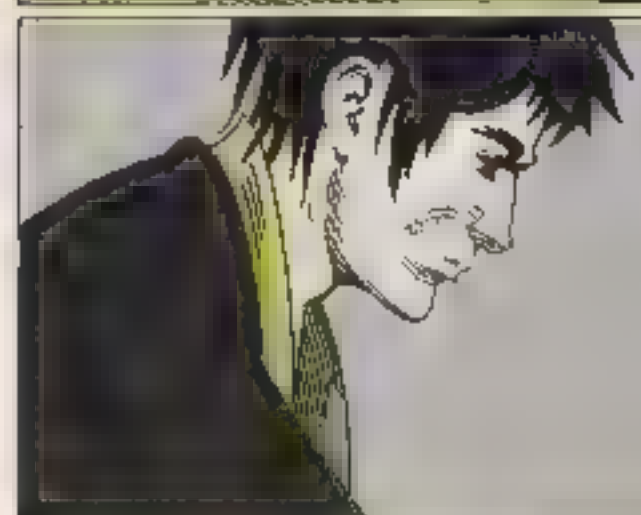
MY
LORD,
I AM A
MONK. I OWN
NOTHING BUT
MY BEGGING
BOWL. BUT THE
DREAM THE FOX
DREAMED WAS
MY DREAM BY
RIGHTS. I ASK
FOR IT TO BE
RETURNED
TO ME.



BUT IF I
RETURN YOUR
DREAM TO YOU,
YOU MUST DIE
IN HER
PLACE.



I UNDERSTAND
THAT BUT IT IS MY
DREAM, AND I WILL NOT
HAVE THIS FOX DIE
IN MY PLACE.



THE KING OF DREAMS NODDED, AND THE MONK KNEW
THAT HIS REQUEST HAD BEEN THE CORRECT ONE.





You have
done the
right thing,
at some cost
to your
self.

I shall
in my turn
do some-
thing for
you.

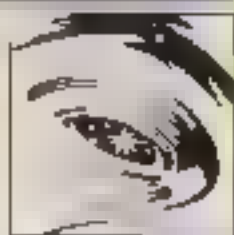
You may
have a little
time to say
farewell to
the fox.



BUT
YOU SWORE TO ME P
MA



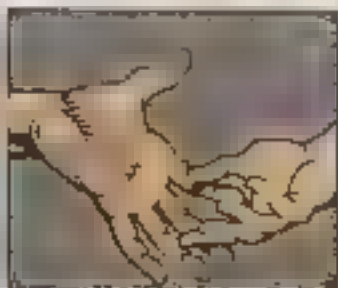
IT
IS NOT
FAIR!



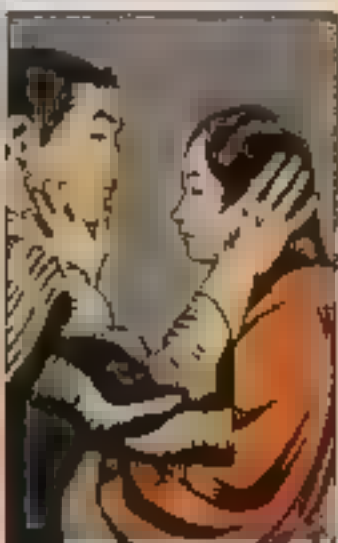
AND CAIRO AND UNPERCEPTIBLY HE LEFT THE TWO OF THEM ALONE IN THAT PLACE
THAT WAS THE TALES OF THIS MOMENT THAT HE LEFT THEM
ALONE TO BID EACH OTHER FAREWELL

PERHAPS
THEY SAID
FORMAL FAREWELLS,
AWKWARD IN THE
SPACE BETWEEN THEM -
BETWEEN A MAN WHO
HAD FORSAKEN THE
WORLD AND A FOX
SPIRIT - A SPACE THAT
COULD NOT BE
CROSSED - IS
CERTAINLY
POSSIBLE

BUT ONE REMEMBERS ALL THEY HAD DONE FOR THE OTHER



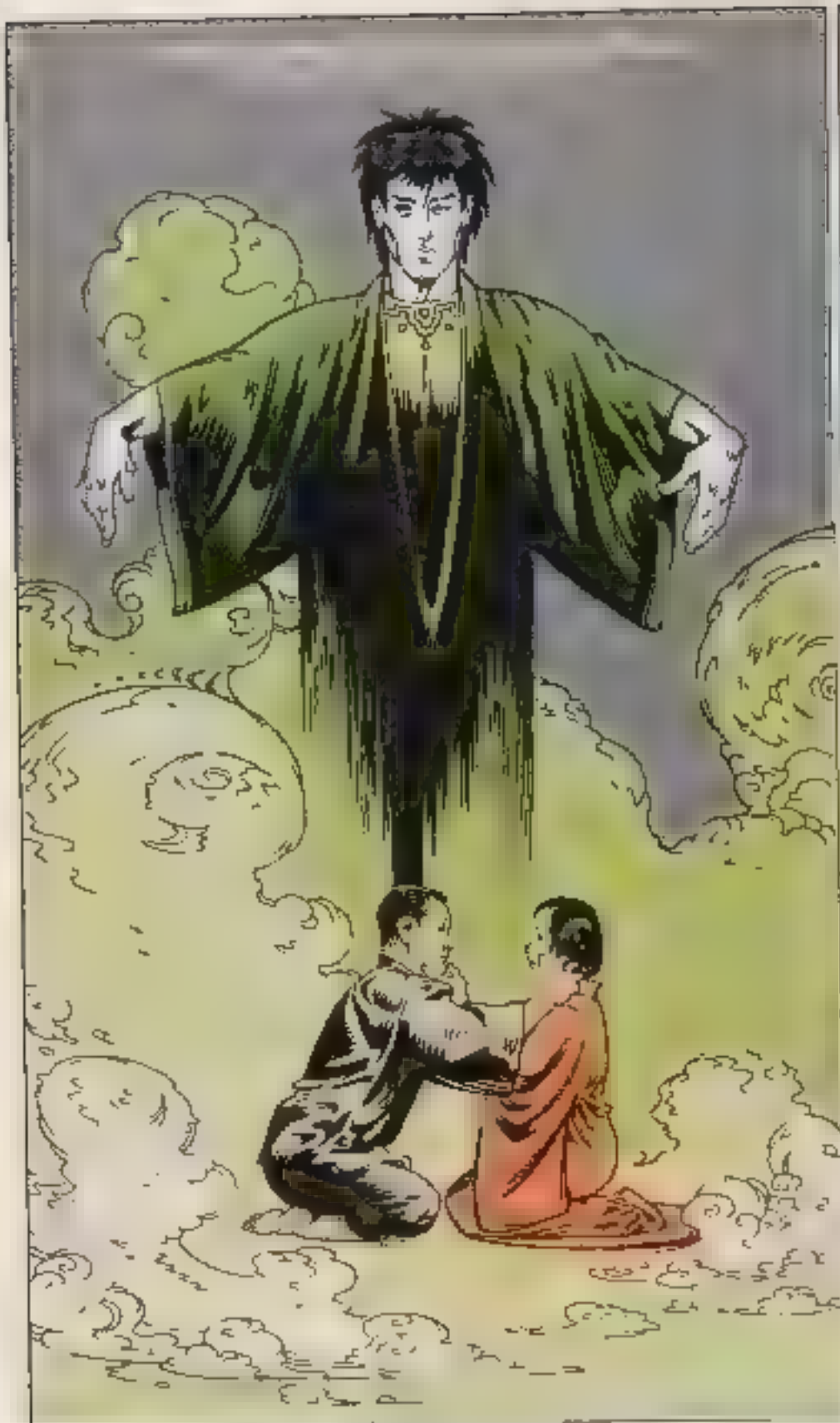
AND ONE MIGHT CON-
JECTURE THAT AT THIS
TIME THEY MADE EYE



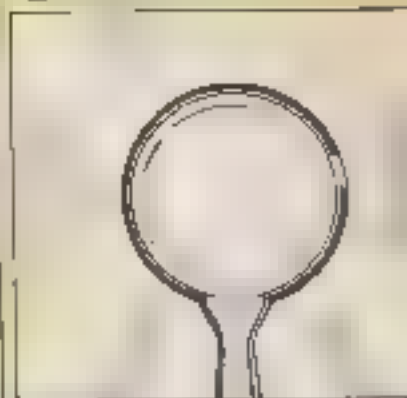
OR DREAMED THAT THEY DID



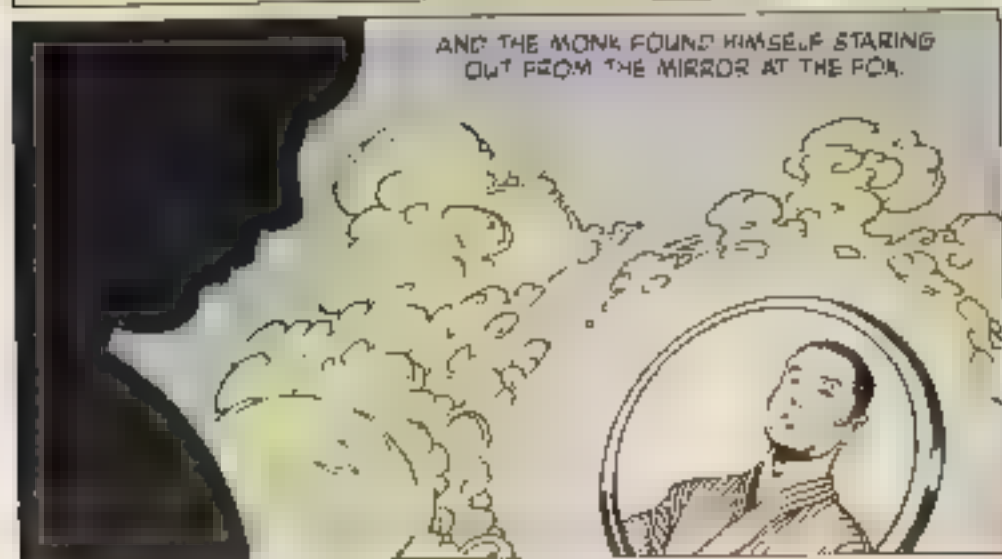
PERHAPS



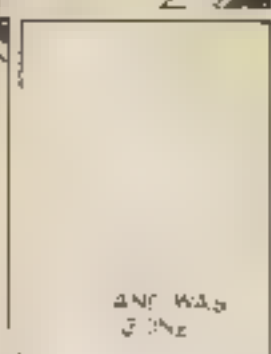
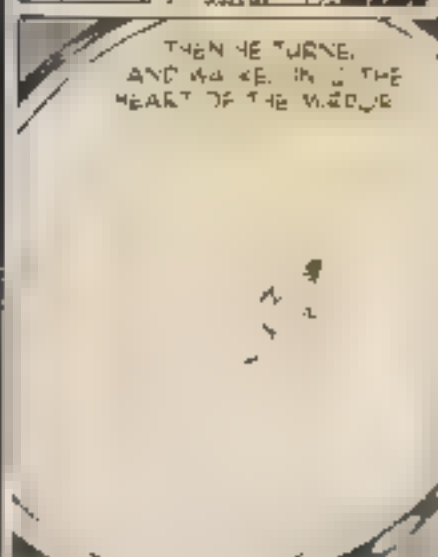
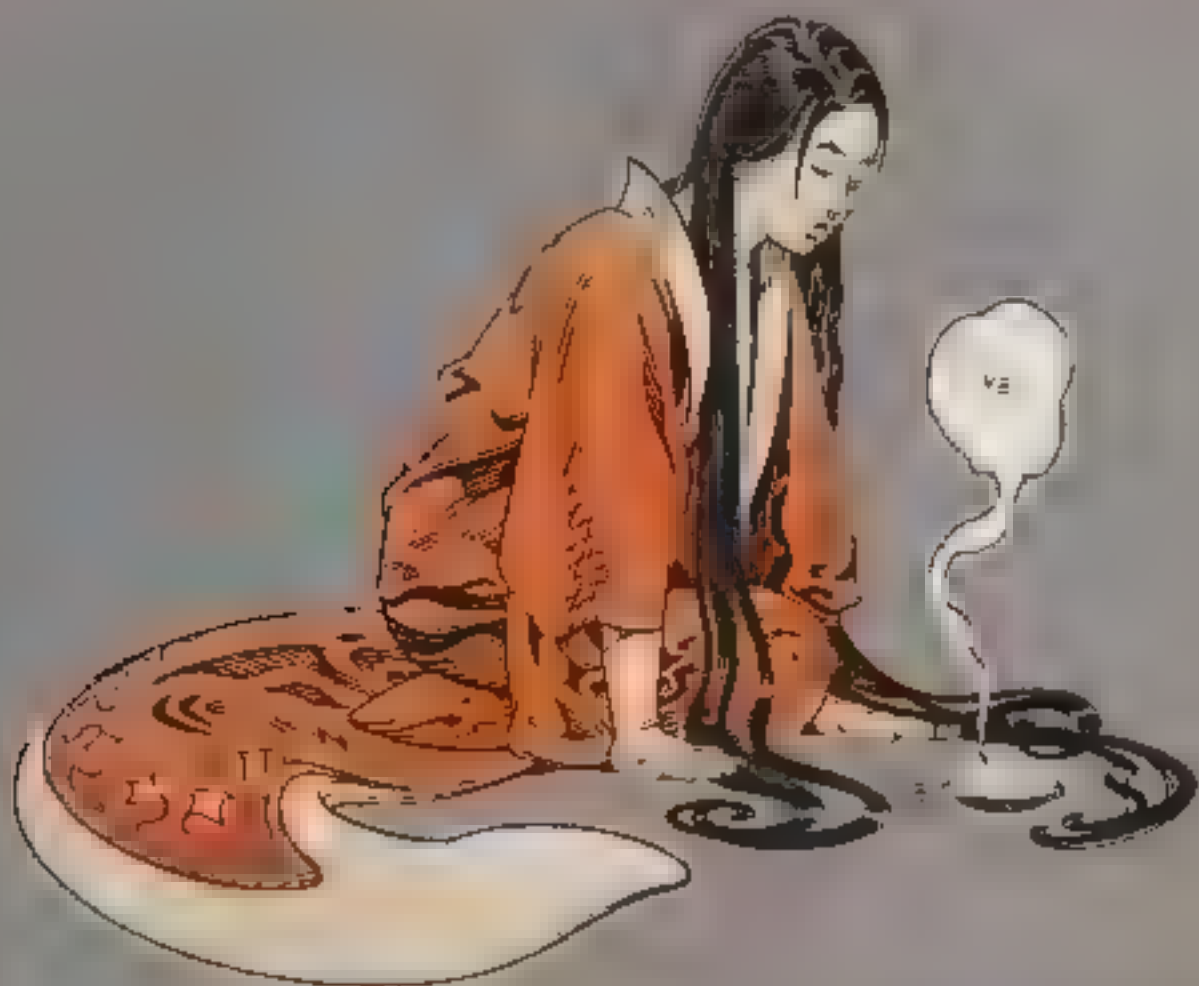
Now as
well be as it
should be.



AND THE MONK FOUND HIMSELF STARING
OUT FROM THE MIRROR AT THE FOX.



I WOULD
HAVE GIVEN MY LIFE
FOR YOU



ALL THAT JIP
EVERYTHING I TRIED TO DO
ALL FOR NOTHING

Nothing is done entirely for nothing.
Nothing is wasted. You are older, and you
have made decisions, and you are not the
fox you were yesterday. Take what you
have learned and move on.

WHERE
S HE
NOW?

His body is on the
sleeping mat in the
temple.

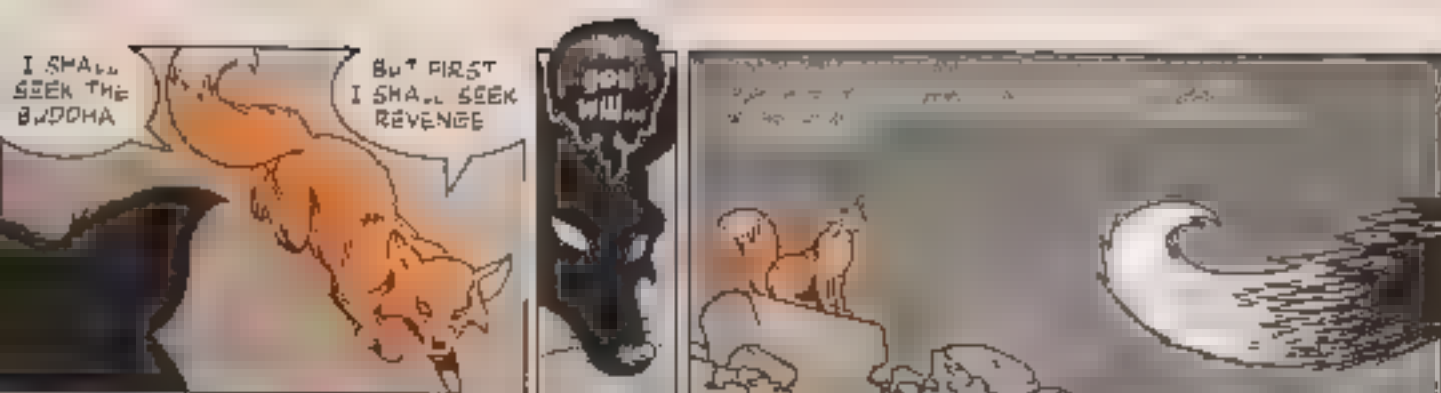
His spirit
will go
where it
is meant
to go.

SO
HE
WILL
DIE?

HE TOLD
ME NOT TO
SEEK REVENGE.
BUT TO SEEK
THE BUJOYA

With Burmes,
vengeance can be a road
that has no ending. You
would be wise to
avoid it.

He will die.



WITH A SWISH OF HIS TAIL, HE BOUNDED AWAY ACROSS THE LANDSCAPE OF DREAMS.

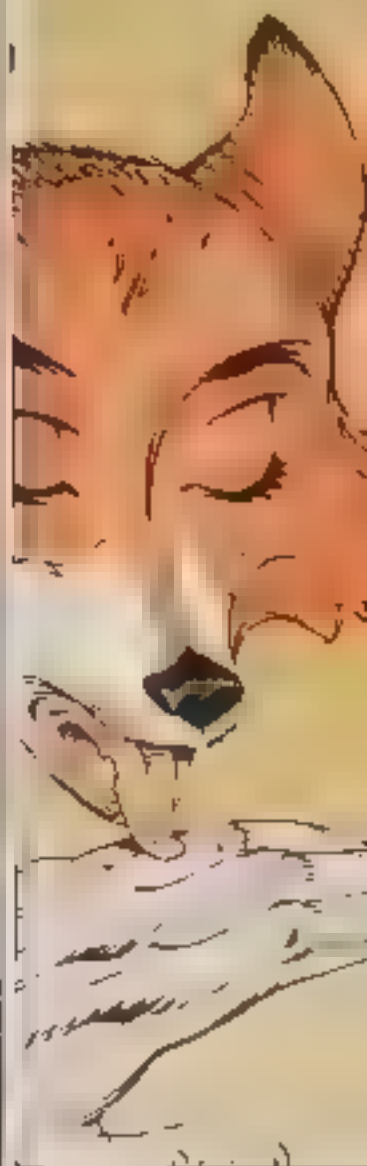


...AND LEFT THE LITTLE
FOX MORE ALONE THAN
SHE HAD EVER BEEN.

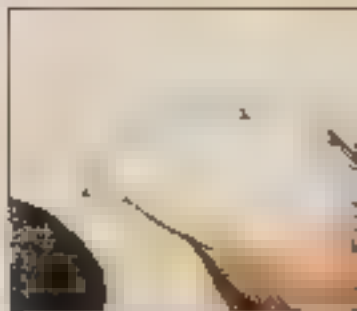
SHE WAS
 LAYING
 DOWN ON THE
 SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN
 BESIDE THE BODY OF
 THE MONK. HIS EYES
 WERE CLOSED AND HIS
 BREATH WAS SHALLOW
 AND HIS SKIN THE
 COLOR OF SEA-
 FOAM



THURT HAVING ALREADY
 SAID AS GOOD BY HIM TO
 HAVE HIM SET THERE BUT
 SHE STAYED WITH HIM AND
 ATTENDED TO HIS BODY



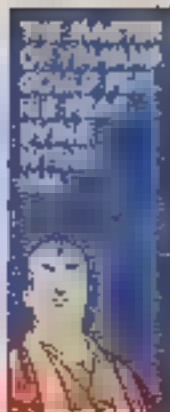
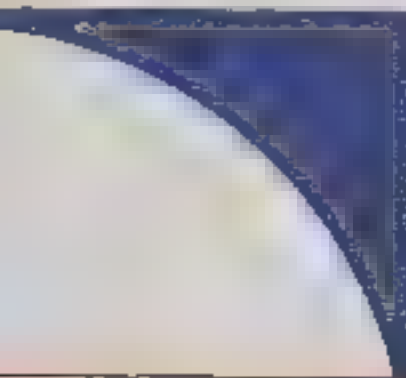
HE MONK DID FEEL BETTER ON THE FOLLOWING DAY



THERE WAS A FUNERAL FOR HIM AT
 THE TEMPLE AND HE WAS
 BURIED ON THE MOUNTAIN SIDE
 BESIDE THE OTHER MONKS
 WHO HAD DIED IN THE
 TEMPLE IN THE
 CENTURES THAT
 HAD GONE
 BEFORE



THE FULL MOON CAME AND WENT AND THE WANING MOON RODE HIGH IN THE SKY



THE MASTER OF THE MANSION
CAME AND
HE TOOK
THE
BOX
AND
THE
KEY
AND
THE
PLATES

HE TOOK THE
LACQUER BOX



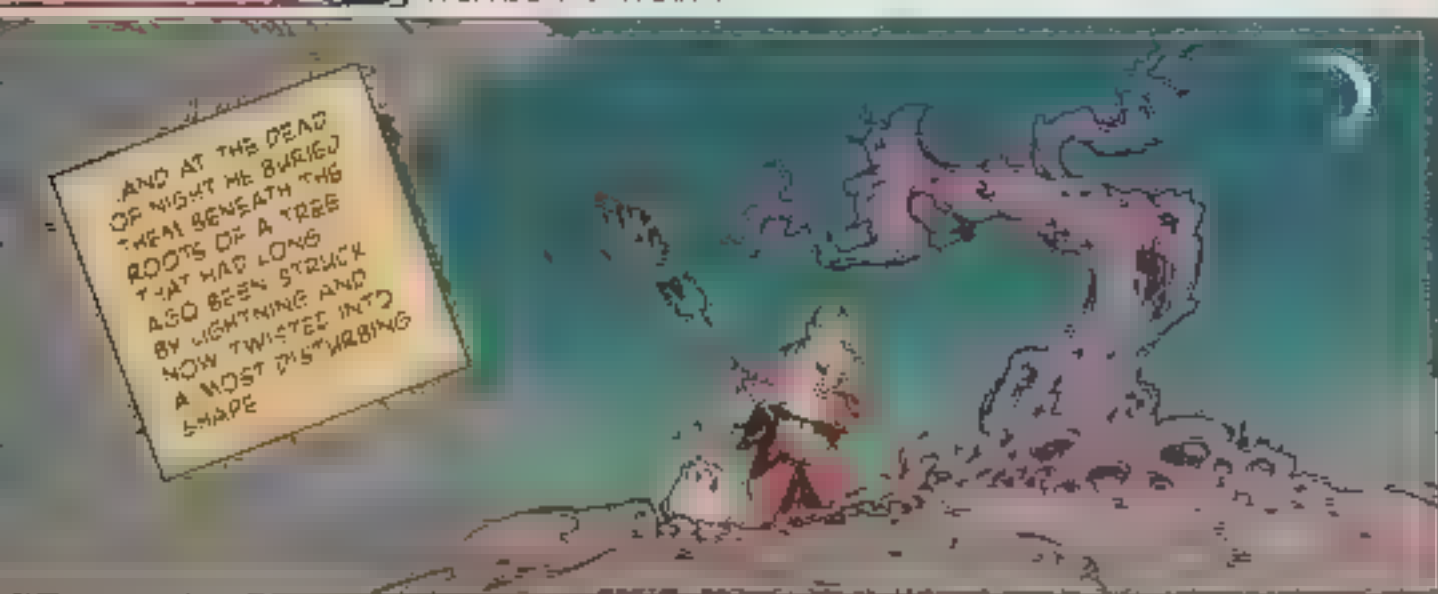
THE
BLACK
KEY



AND THE LITTLE
PORCELAIN PLATES



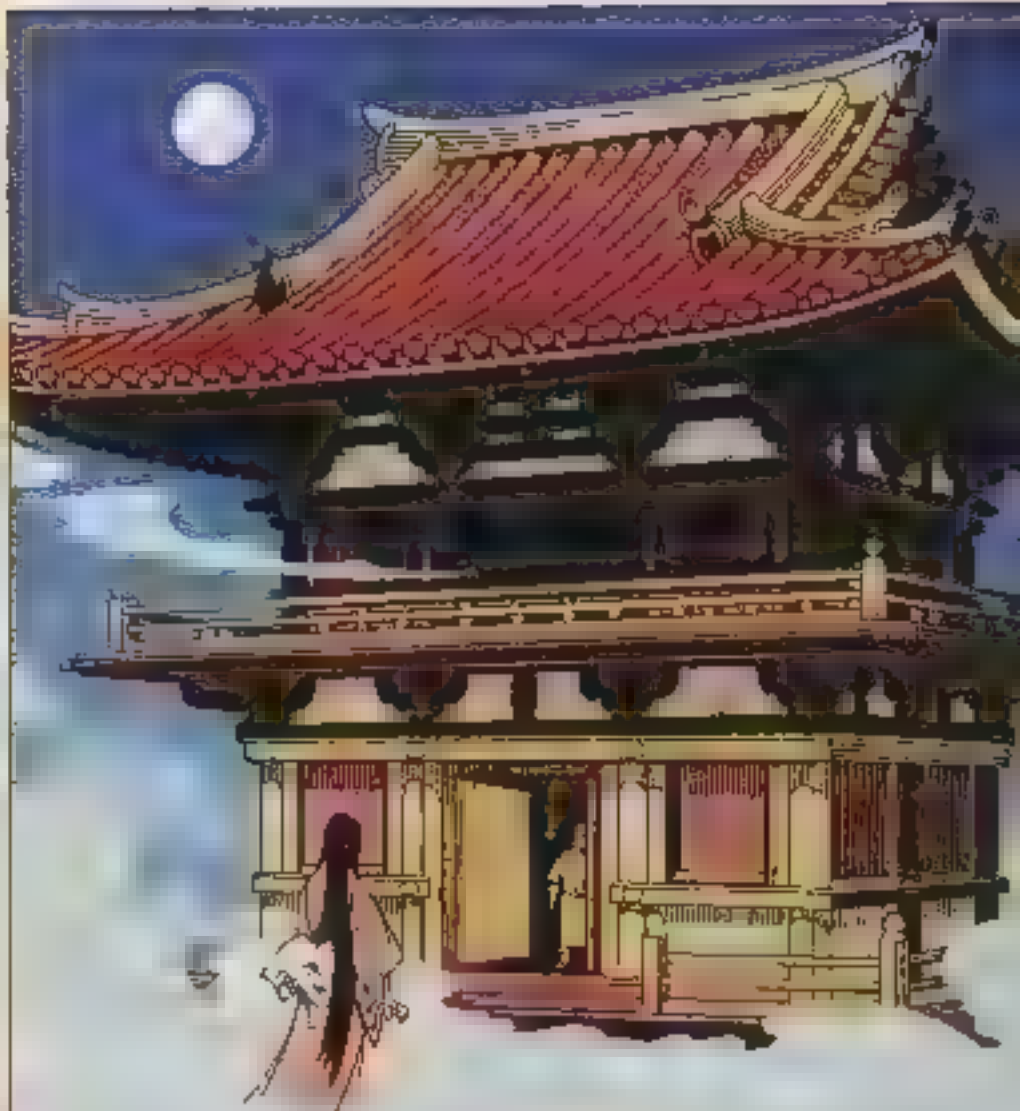
AND HE WRAPPED THEM UP IN THE SQUARE OF SILK WHICH SHOWED ONLY HIS
FACE NOW FOR OF THE OTHER PAINTED FIGURE THERE WAS NOTHING MORE THAN
A SHADOW OF A STAIN



AND AT THE DEAD
OF NIGHT HE BURIED
THEM BENEATH THE
ROOTS OF A TREE
THAT HAD LONG
AGO BEEN STRUCK
BY LIGHTNING AND
NOW TWISTED INTO
A MOST DISTURBING
SHAPE

HE
WAS
RELIEVED
THAT HE
WAS
ALIVE
HE WAS
HAPPIER
THAN HE
HAD
EVER
BEEN

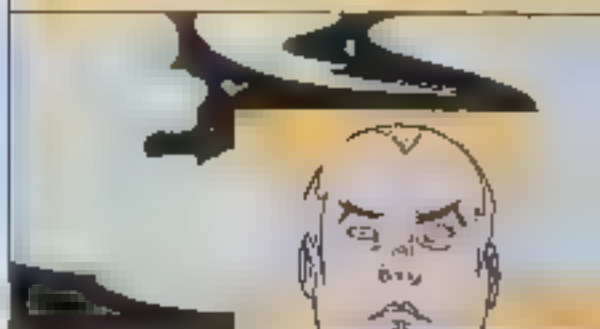
THOSE
WERE
GOOD
DAYS
FOR
THE
ONMYOJI



THE MOON WAS AGAIN
FULL IN THE SKY WHEN HE
WAS VISITED BY A MAIDEN
OF HIGH BIRTH WHO WISHED
TO CONSULT HIM ABOUT
PROPITIOUS DAYS



A MIST HUNG HEAVY IN THE AIR THAT DAY AND IT
TWINED ITS TENDRILS THROUGH THE ONMYOJI'S HOUSE.



SHE PAID FOR
THE WISDOM
WITH GOLD
COINS SO
OLD THEY
WERE
ALMOST
FEATURE
LESS



THEN SHE LEFT HIS HOUSE IN A
MAGNIFICENT OX-DRAWN CARRIAGE



THE MASTER OF YIN-YANG
TOLD HIS SERVANT TO FOLLOW
HER ON HORSEBACK AND TO
DISCOVER WHO THE MAIDEN
WAS AND WHERE SHE LIVED.

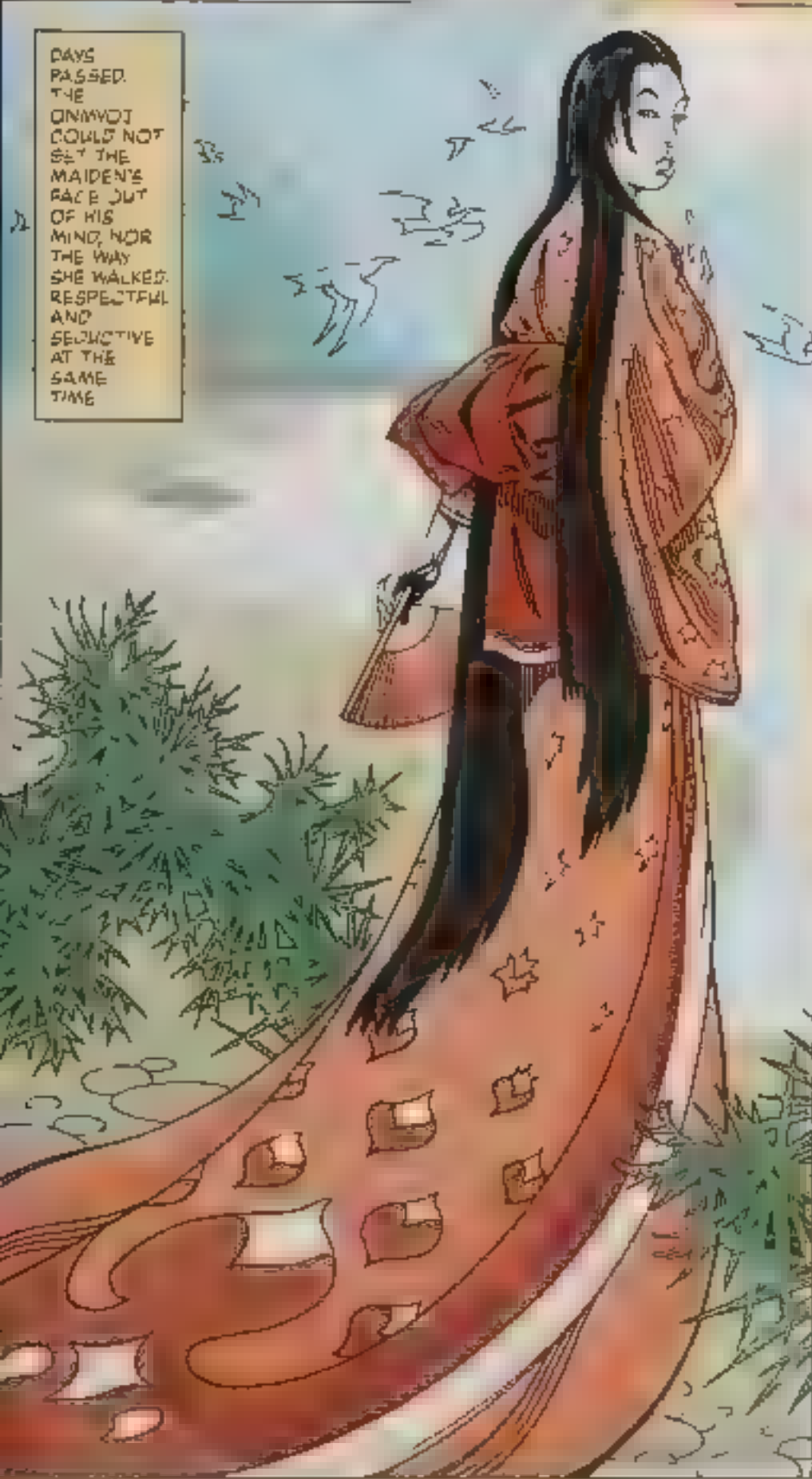
SEVERAL HOURS LATER.



SHE LIVES
IN AN OLD BUT
IMPRESSIVE HOUSE
SEVERAL KI NORTH
OF KYOTO.



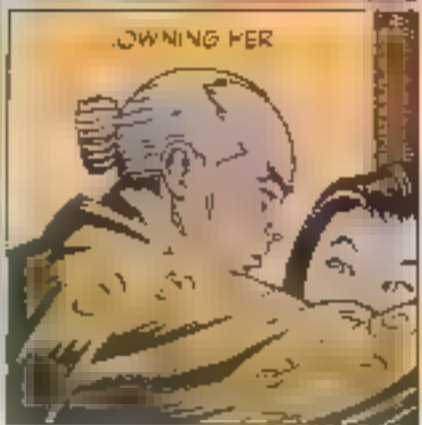
DAYS
PASSED.
THE
ONMYOJI
COULD NOT
GET THE
MAIDEN'S
FACE OUT
OF HIS
MIND, NOR
THE WAY
SHE WALKED.
RESPECTFUL
AND
SEDUCTIVE
AT THE
SAME
TIME



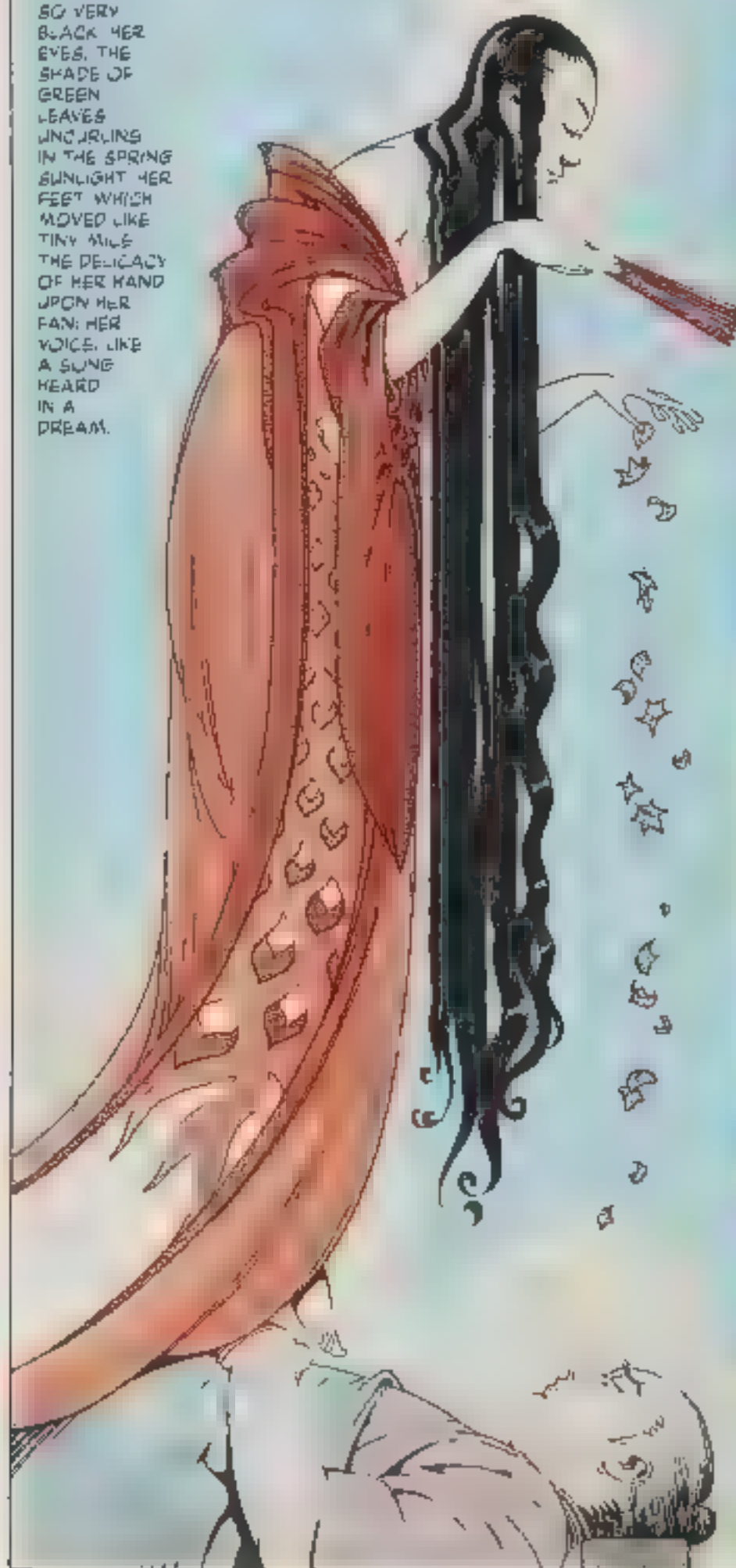
TOUCHING HER



OWNING HER



WHEN HE
CLOSED
HIS EYES AT
NIGHT THE
MAIDEN WAS
THERE HER
HAIR SO
LONG, AND
SO VERY
BLACK HER
EYES, THE
SHADE OF
GREEN
LEAVES
UNCURLING
IN THE SPRING
SUNLIGHT HER
FEET WHICH
MOVED LIKE
TINY WILDS
THE DELICACY
OF HER HAND
UPON HER
FAN; HER
VOICE, LIKE
A SONG
HEARD
IN A
DREAM.



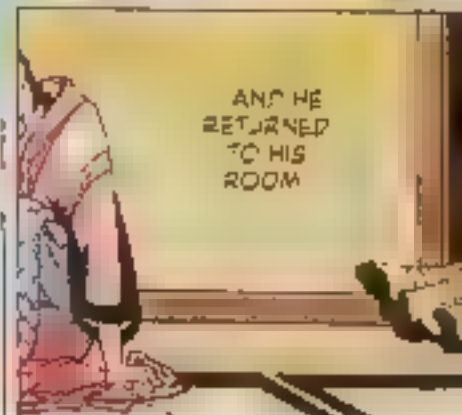
WHEN HE WENT TO MAKE LOVE
TO HIS CONCUBINE



SHE DID NOT IN BREATHE HIM



AND HE
RETURNED
TO HIS
ROOM





HE WROTE
A POEM
COMPARING
HIS
FEELINGS
ABOUT
THE
MAIDEN
TO THE
AUTUMN
WIND
STIRRING
THE
SURFACE
OF A
POOL
THAT
HAD,
UNTIL
NOW,
BEEN
PLACID



THE SERVANT BROUGHT BACK HER REPLY

A POEM
IN WHICH
SHE SPOKE
OF THE
REFLECTION
OF THE
MOON IN
THE POOL
STIRRED
BY THE
WIND

HIS HEART
SWELLED
WITHIN
HIM WHEN
HE READ IT
ASTONISHED

~~~~~

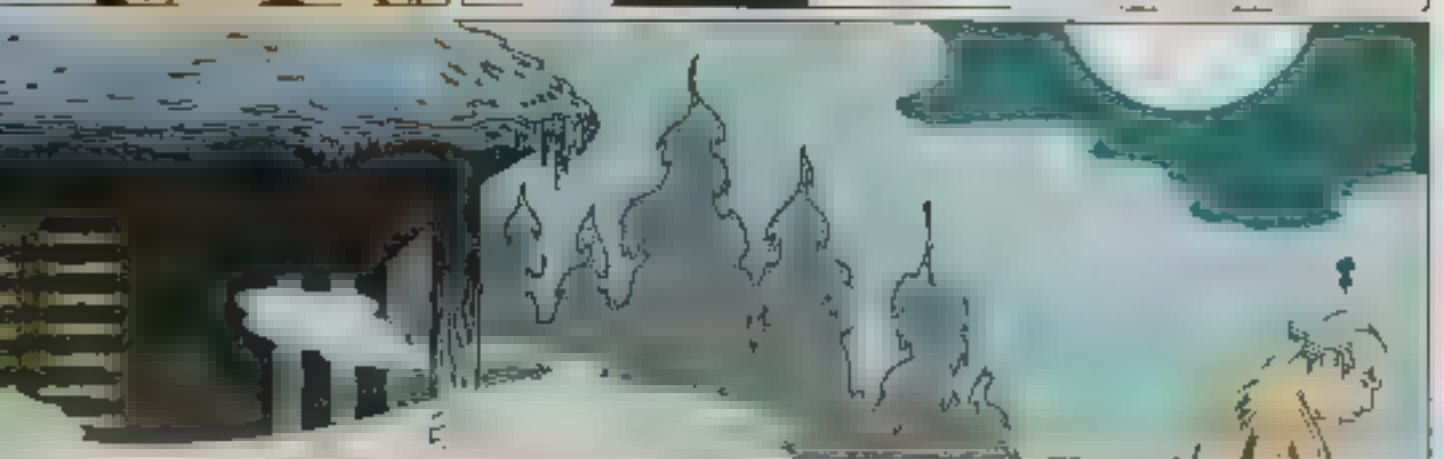
HE  
ASKED HIS  
JIALES  
ABOUT  
HER



THE  
MAN SHE  
LOVED'S  
JED



GOOD  
WHEN'S THE  
MOST PROPITIOUS  
DAY TO VISIT  
HER?





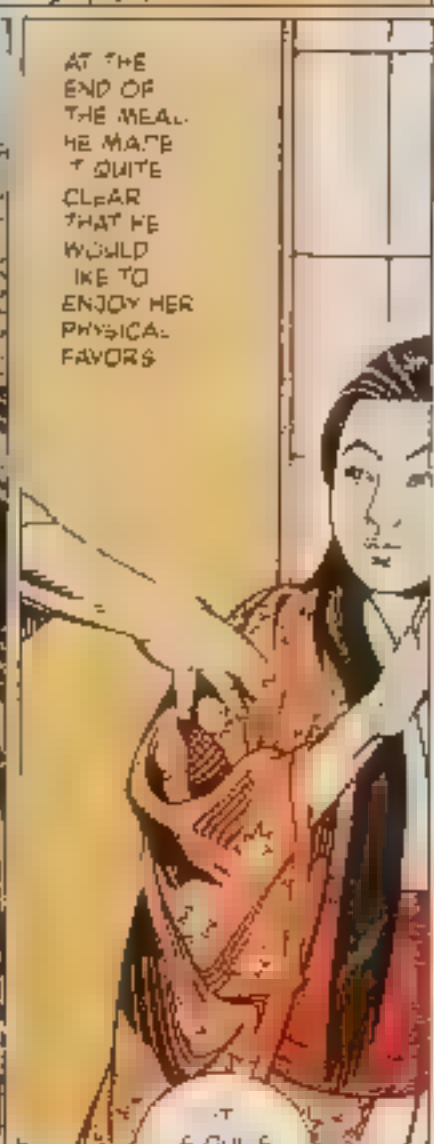




I  
HAVE NEVER  
TASTED ANY  
THING THIS  
FINE



AND TO  
THINK, IF I  
HAD NOT BEEN HERE  
YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN  
FORCED TO SIT IN THE  
TUMBLEDOWN RUINS OF  
AN OLD AND EMPTY  
HOUSE AND DINE ON  
MICE AND  
SPIDERS



AT THE  
END OF  
THE MEAL  
HE MADE  
IT QUITE  
CLEAR  
THAT HE  
WOULD  
LIKE TO  
ENJOY HER  
PHYSICAL  
FAVORS



IT  
IS QUITE  
OUT OF THE  
QUESTION

FOR, WHY WOULD  
I WISH TO BE SECOND  
IN YOUR AFFEC-  
TIONS?

YOU  
HAVE A  
WIFE

YOU  
HAVE A  
CONCUBINE

WHAT  
WOULD  
I BE?

I  
WILL BE  
YOURS, AND  
YOUR  
ALONE



YOU  
SAY  
THAT

BUT AFTER YOU HAVE MADE  
LOVE TO ME THEN YOUR WIFE AND  
YOUR CONCUBINE WILL SEEM MORE  
ATTRACTIVE AND I WILL BE  
LEFT ALONE



I DO  
NOT THINK  
YOU SHOULD  
STAY THE  
NIGHT  
HERE

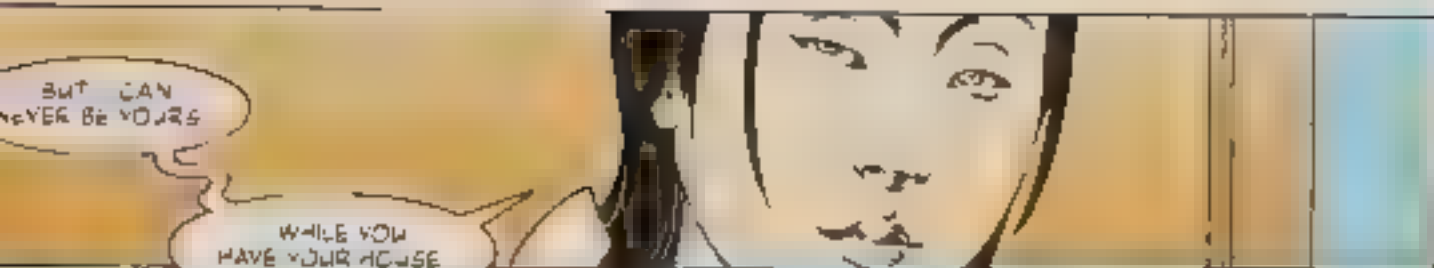


YOUR  
CARRIAGE WILL  
TAKE YOU TO ANOTHER  
HOUSE FOR THE NIGHT  
IF EVER YOU ARE FREE TO  
LOVE ME AND ME  
ALONE, THEN COME  
BACK



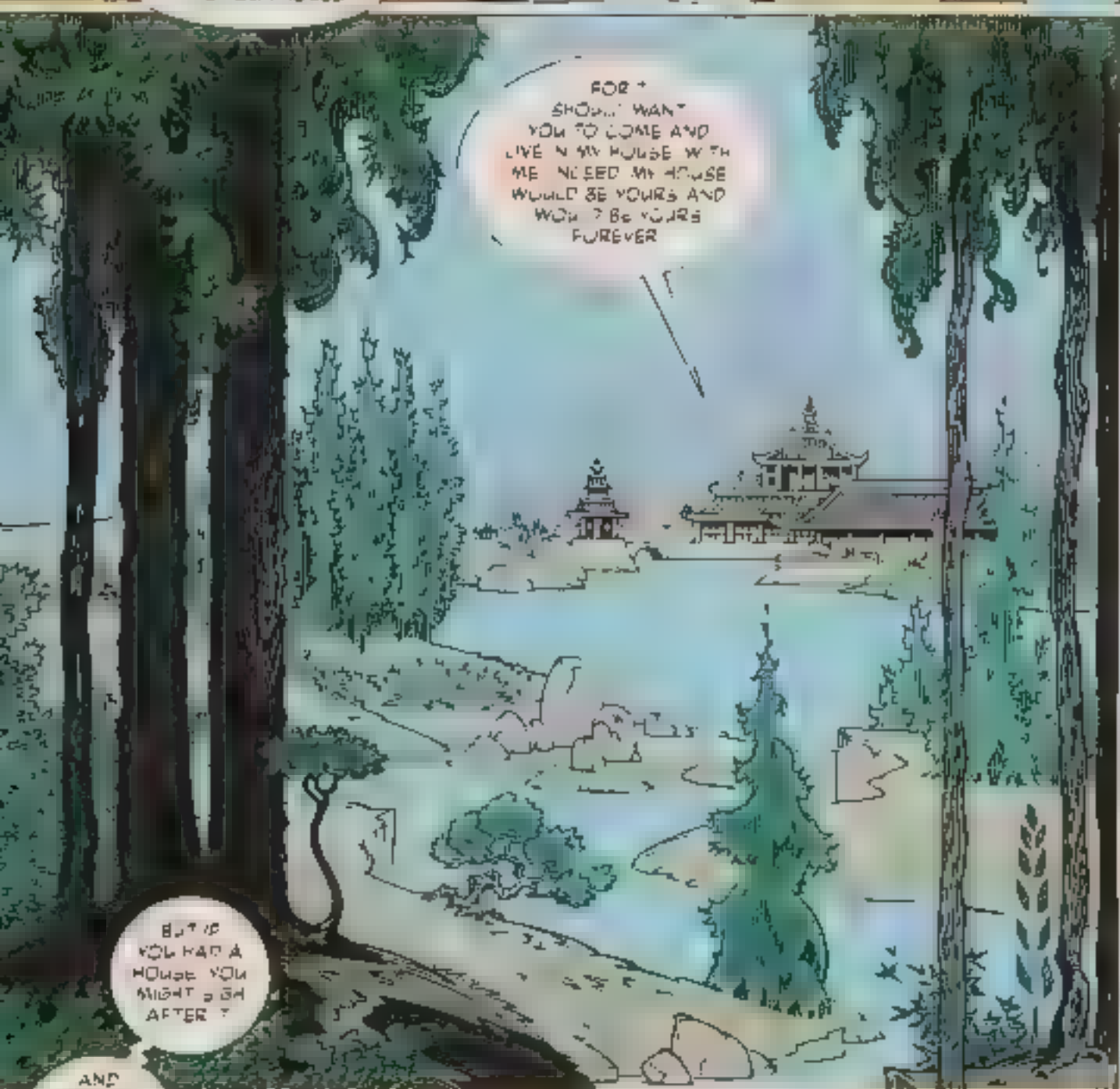
IT IS  
AS GOOD  
AS DONE





BUT CAN  
NEVER BE YOURS

WHILE YOU  
HAVE YOUR HOUSE



FOR +  
SHOULD WANT  
YOU TO COME AND  
LIVE IN MY HOUSE WITH  
ME NEED MY HOUSE  
WOULD BE YOURS AND  
WOULD BE YOURS  
FOREVER

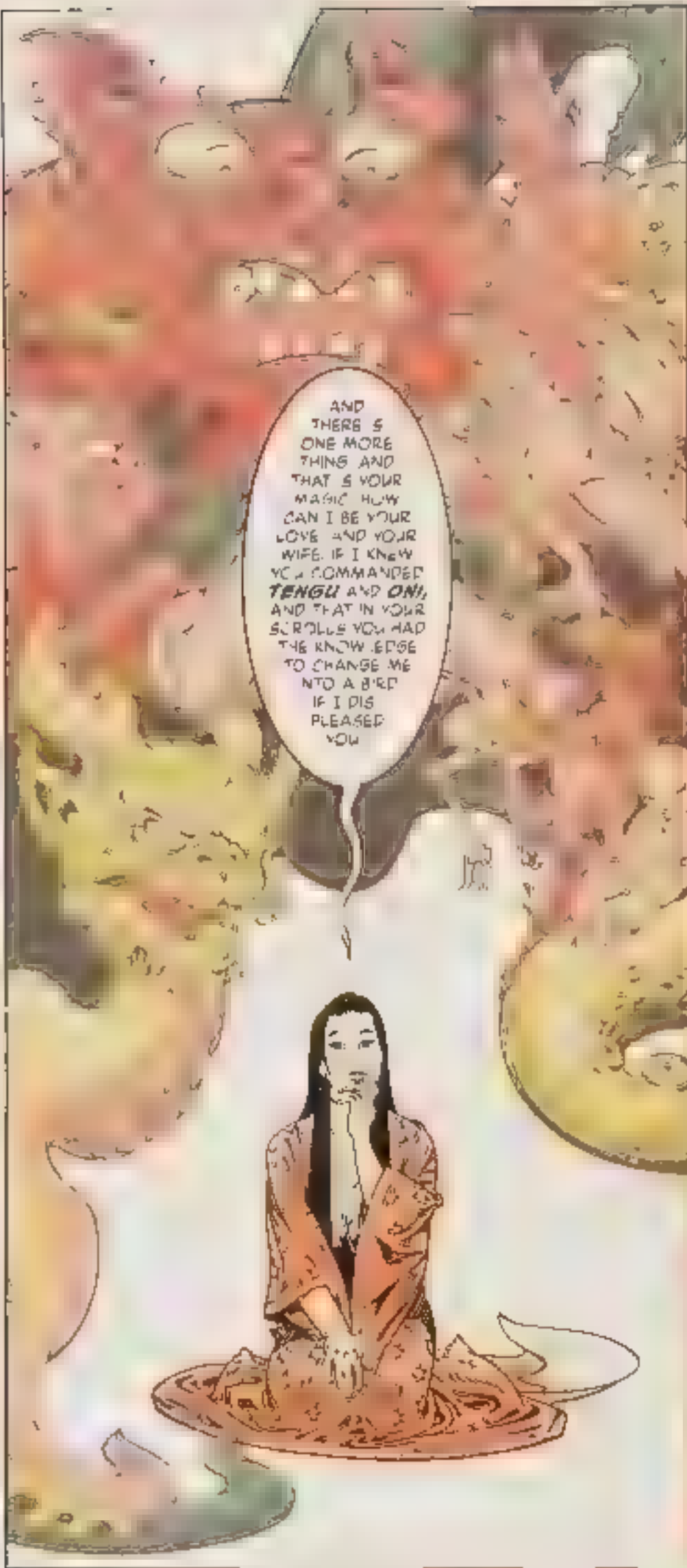
BUT IF  
YOU HAD A  
HOUSE YOU  
MIGHT BE  
AFTER ?

AND  
ONE DAY  
YOU WOULD  
LEAVE ME FOR  
YOUR OWN  
HOUSE

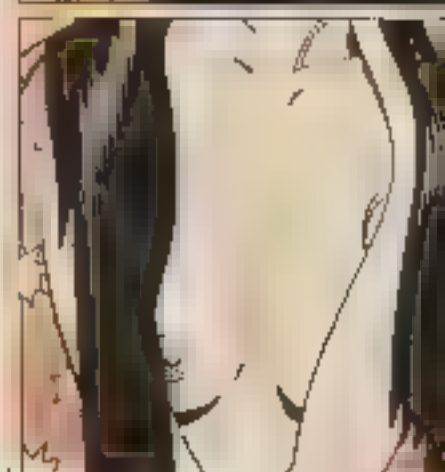
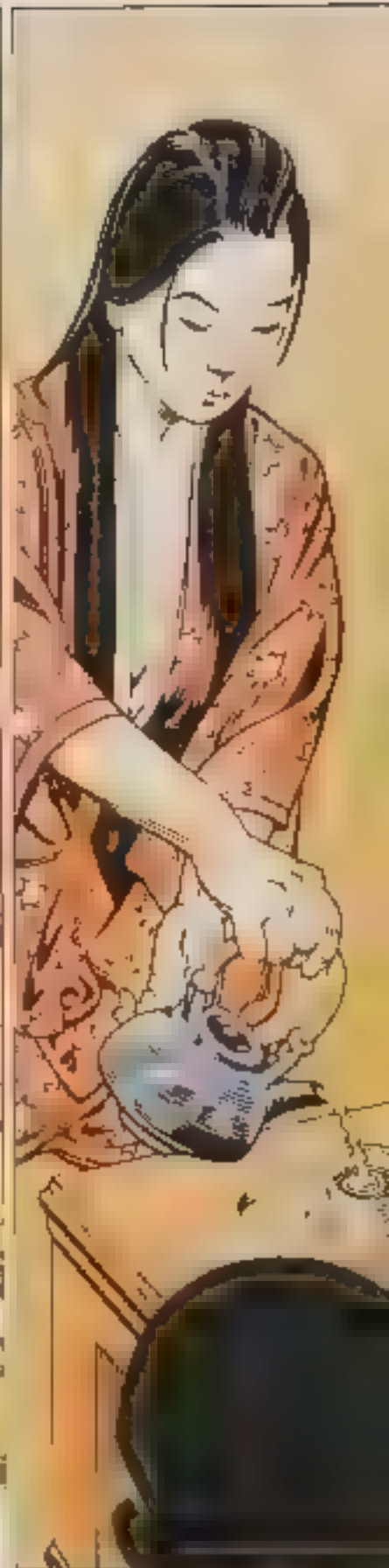


SHOULD  
TALK WITH ME  
WILL DO





AND  
THERE'S  
ONE MORE  
THING AND  
THAT'S YOUR  
MAGIC. HOW  
CAN I BE YOUR  
LOVE AND YOUR  
WIFE, IF I KNEW  
YOU COMMANDED  
**TENGU AND ONI**,  
AND THAT IN YOUR  
SCROLLS YOU HAD  
THE KNOWLEDGE  
TO CHANGE ME  
INTO A BIRD  
IF I DIS-  
PLEASED  
YOU





THE ONMYOJI  
LEAPT TO GRAB  
HOLD OF HER  
BUT THE MAIDEN  
DEFTLY MOVED  
BACK, AVOIDING  
HIS GRASP AS IF  
SHE HAD BARELY  
NOTICED IT



WHEN HE REALIZED THAT THEIR TIME TOGETHER WAS OVER HE SIGHED SO  
LOUDLY IT SEEMED THE HINGES OF THE WORLD WERE GROANING



THERE WAS A MADNESS  
THAT CAME ON HIM THEN  
OR SO THEY SAID.

ON THE  
FOLLOWING  
NIGHT  
THERE  
WERE  
TWO  
FIRES  
IN THE  
CITY OF  
KYOTO  
THE FIRST  
HOUSE  
TO BURN  
WAS  
THAT  
OF THE  
ONNABUJI  
THE  
SEVEN-  
TEENTH  
FINEST  
HOUSE  
IN ALL  
THE CITY.



HE WAS NOT  
SUSPECTED OF  
ANY INVOLVEMENT  
HAVING LEFT THE  
HOUSE, EARLIER  
THAT DAY, IN A  
CART LOADED  
HIGH WITH ALL  
HIS SCROLLS AND  
HIS IMPLEMENTS  
OF MAGIC



IT WAS A TRAGIC FIRE FOR HIS  
WIFE AND HIS CONCUBINE AND  
ALL HIS SERVANTS WERE ASLEEP  
INSIDE THE HOUSE AS IT BLAZED.  
AND IT TOOK THEIR LIVES.





THE OTHER HOUSE TO  
BURN WAS A HOVEL ON  
THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE  
CITY IN A NEIGHBORHOOD  
OF ILL REPUTE. IT WAS A  
HOUSE WHERE THREE  
WOMEN LIVED, WHO WERE  
SAID TO HAVE BEEN  
FORTUNETELLERS AND  
HERBALISTS.



NO ONE KNOWS IF THEY WERE IN THE HOUSE WHEN  
IT BURNED, FOR THE ONLY REMAINS THAT WERE  
FOUND IN THE ASHES WERE THE BONES AND  
SKULLS OF BABES AND SMALL CHILDREN



IT WAS EVENING  
WHEN THE MASTER  
OF YIN-YANG ARRIVED  
AT THE HOUSE OF  
THE MAIDEN WHO  
HAD WON HIS HEART

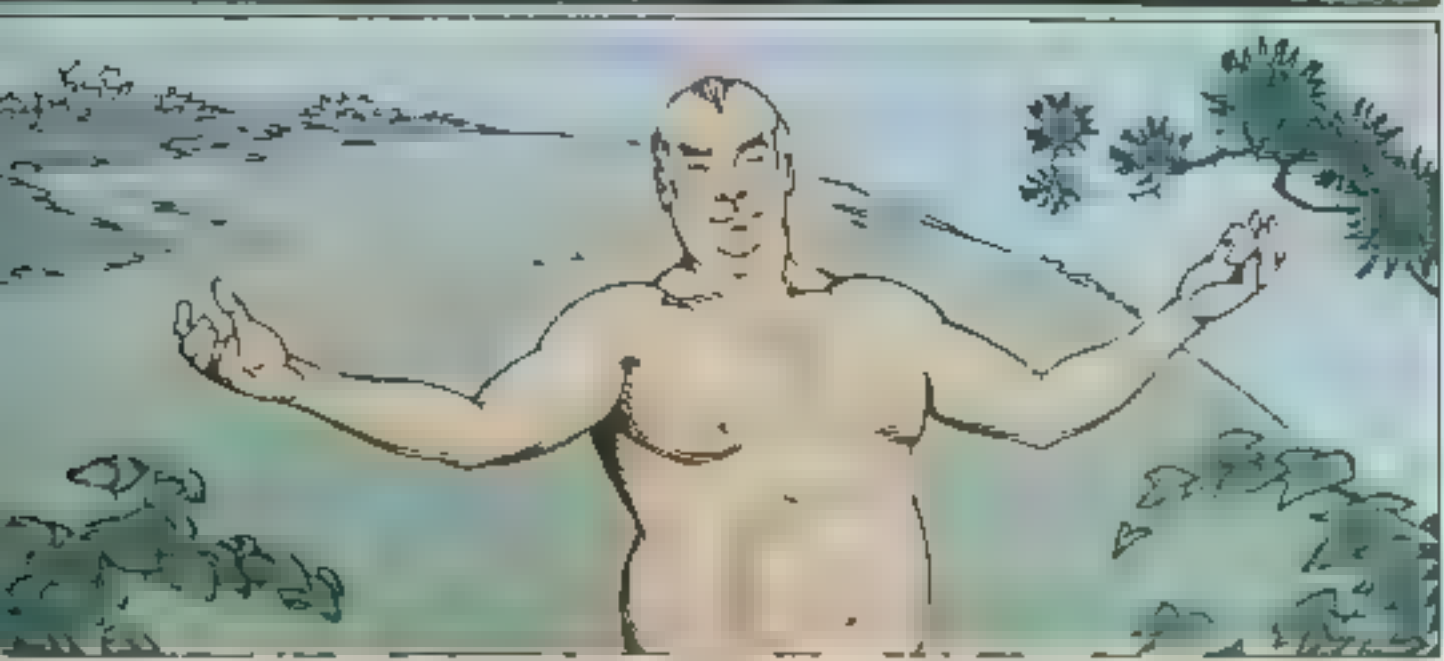
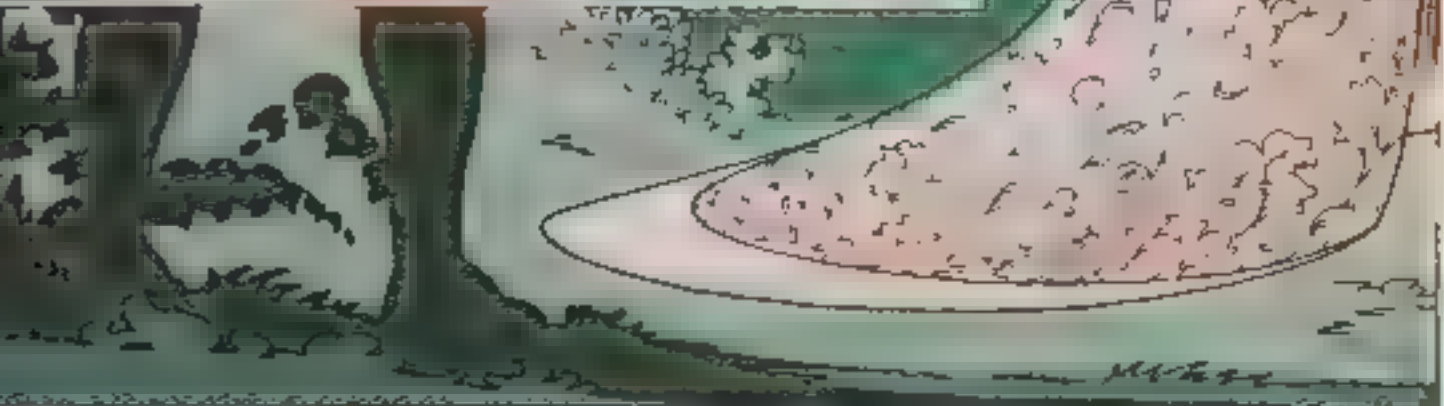
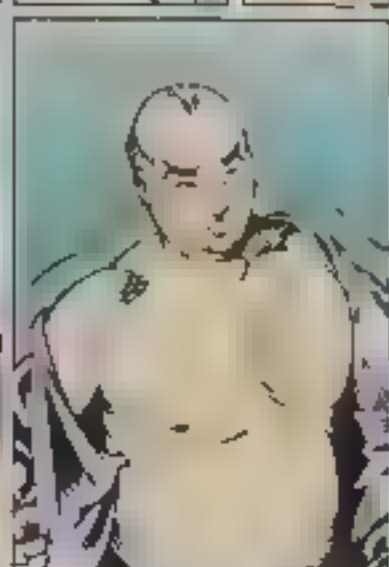
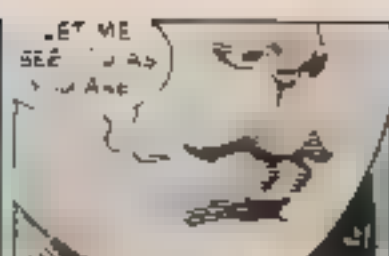
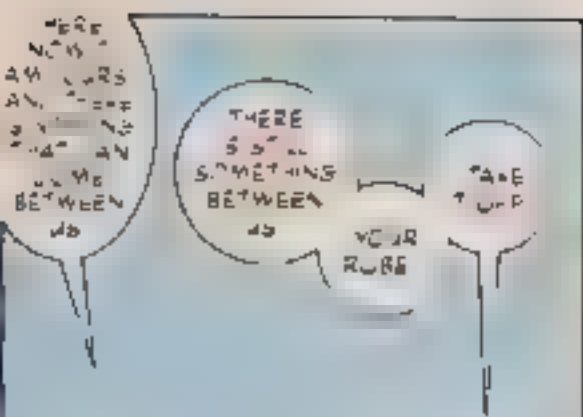
MY  
HOUSE  
BURNED  
AND MY  
WOMEN  
ARE DEAD.  
I HAVE NO  
ONE TO  
LOVE BUT  
YOU AND  
NOWHERE  
TO BE  
BUT  
HERE

HE SMILED  
AT HIM THEN  
A SMILE OF  
SUCH HAPPY-  
NESS THAT IT  
SEEMED TO  
HIM THAT THE  
SUN HAD COME  
OUT AND  
SHONE ON  
HIM ALONE

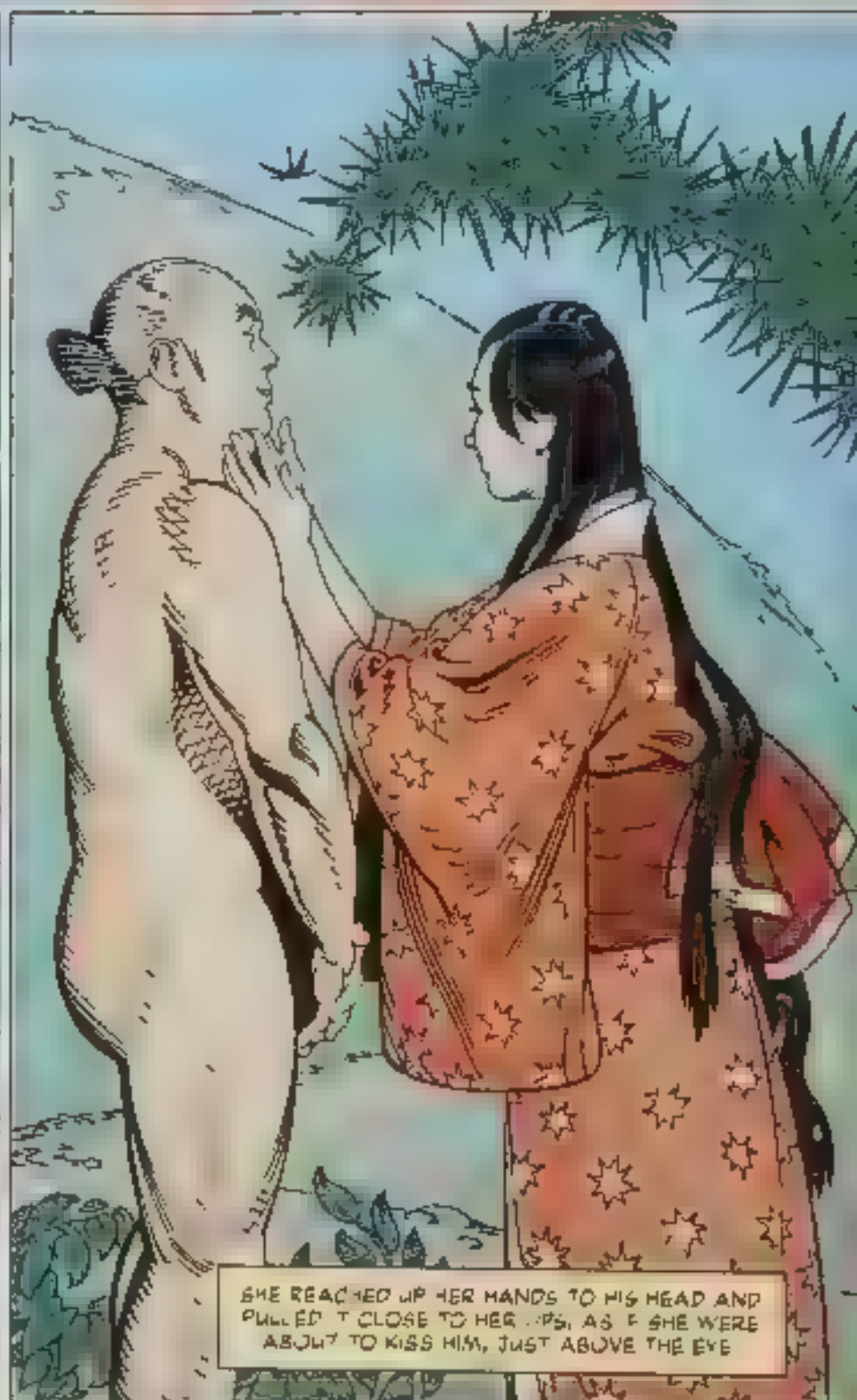
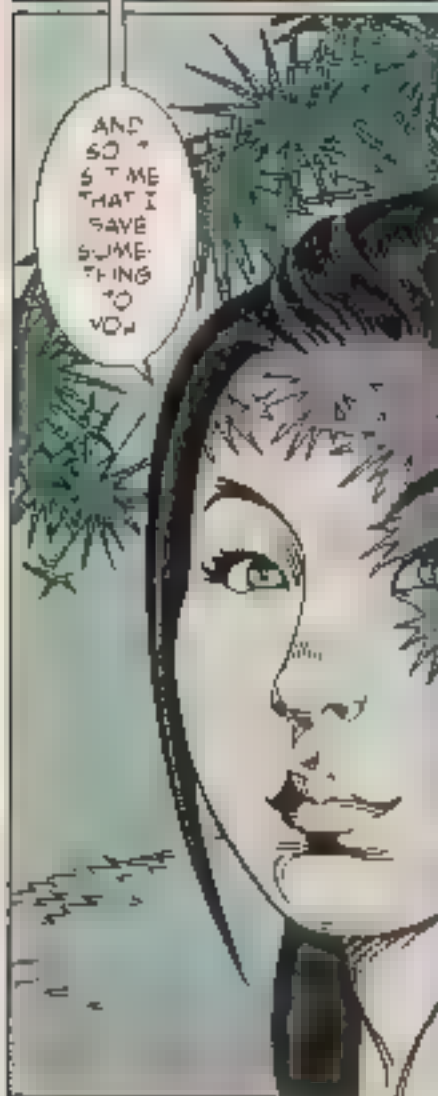
AND IN  
THIS CART I HAVE MY  
KNOWLEDGE AND MY SCROLLS,  
ALL MY MAGICAL IMPLEMENTS ALL  
THE AMULETS AND WANDS AND  
NAMES THAT GIVE ME POWER OVER  
THE SPIRITS AND DEMONS ALL  
OF IT I HAVE BROUGHT  
HERE TO LAY AT YOUR  
FEET

THE MAIDEN NODDED

AND SEVERAL OF  
HER SERVANTS TOOK  
THE CART AND UN-  
PACKED ITS CONTENTS  
AND THE THINGS HE  
HAD BROUGHT AWAY







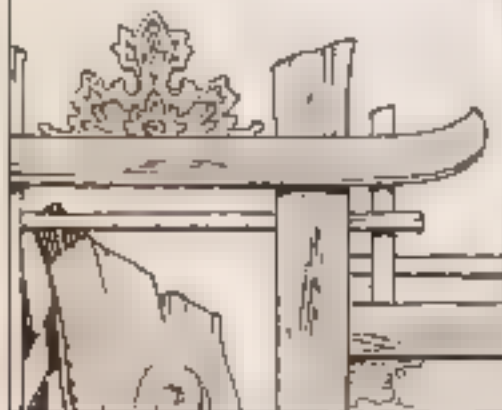
BUT YOU  
SHALL KEEP  
YOUR LIFE FOR  
HE WOULDN'T  
HAVE WANTED  
ME TO KILL  
YOU.



THE MASTER OF YIN-YANG WAS FOUND THE NEXT MORNING IN THE GROUNDS OF A HOUSE THAT HAD BEEN ABANDONED TWENTY YEARS EARLIER WHEN THE OFFICIAL WHOSE FAMILY HAD OWNED IT WAS DISGRACED



SOME SAID IT WAS GUILT THAT HAD BROUGHT HIM THERE FOR FIFTEEN YEARS EARLIER THE ONMYOJI HAD BEEN IN THE SERVICE OF THE LORD WHO HAD CAUSED THE DOWNFALL OF THAT FAMILY.



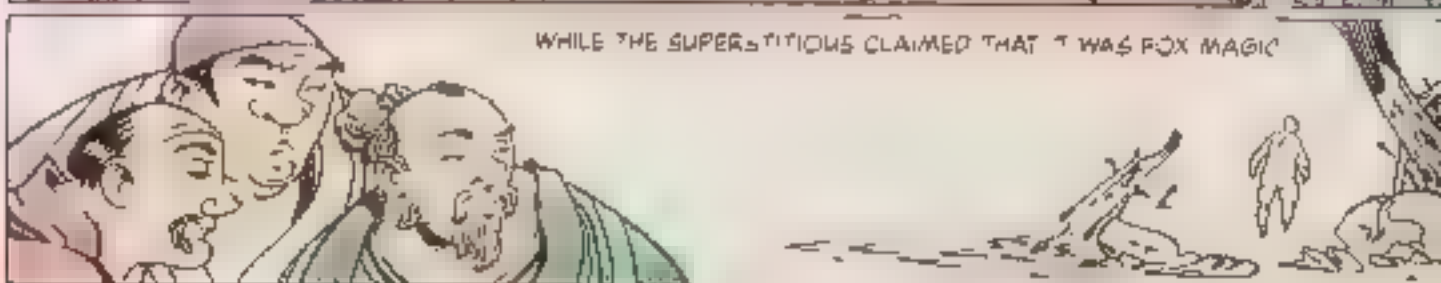
HE WAS NAKED, AND ASHAMED AND QUITE MAD

SOME SAID IT WAS THE LOSS OF HIS WIFE AND HIS HOME IN A FIRE THAT HAD DRIVEN HIM TO MADNESS.

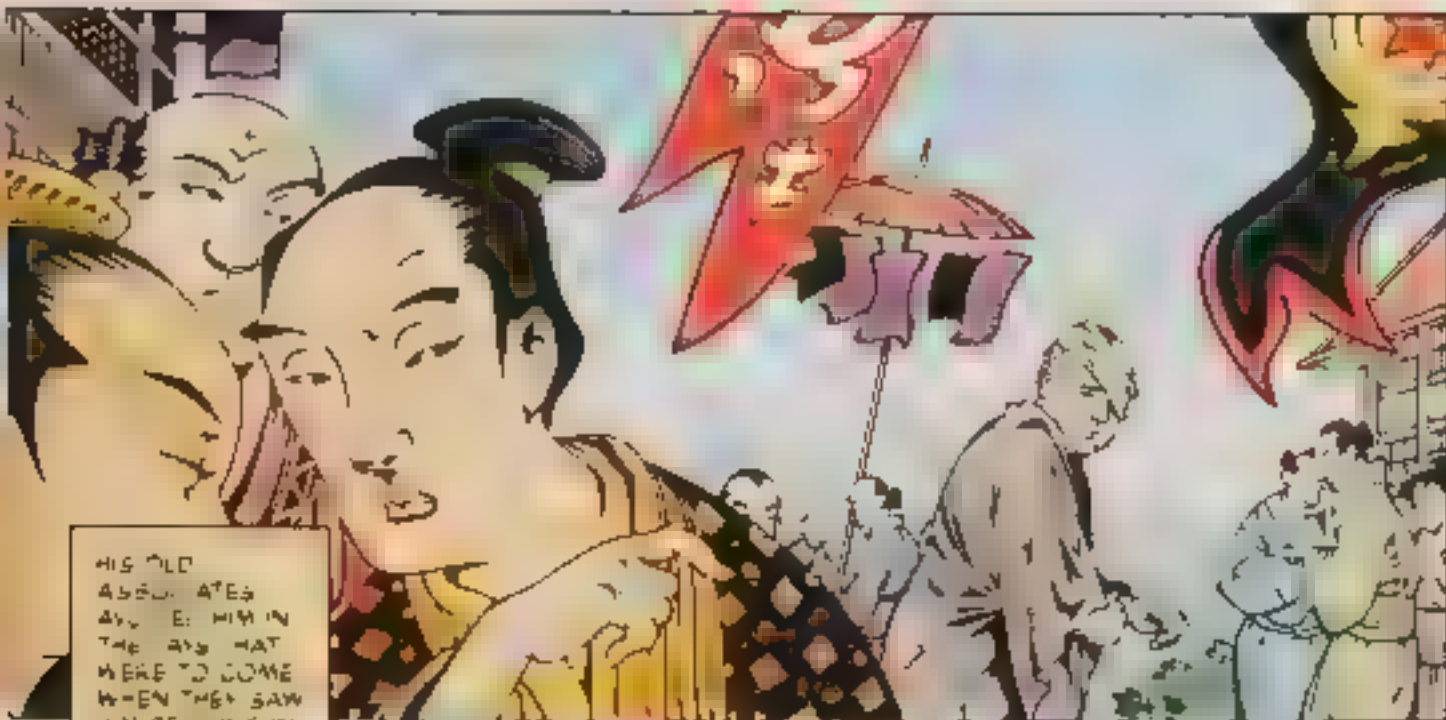
OTHERS CLAIMED IT WAS THE LOSS OF HIS EYE



WHILE THE SUPERSTITIOUS CLAIMED THAT IT WAS FOX MAGIC







HIS OLD  
ASSOCIATES  
ADVISED HIM IN  
THE DAYS THAT  
WERE TO COME  
WHEN THEY SAW  
A MAN RUNNING IN  
THE STREETS  
WITH TWO BAGS  
TO COVER HIS  
NAMELESS  
ONLY A MAN  
ABOUT HIS  
HEAD TO HIDE  
THE RUIN OF  
HIS FACE

HE LIVED IN  
MISERY AND  
SOLITUDE AND  
NAMELESS UNTIL  
HE MET WITH  
NO HAPPINESS  
TO BE FOUND  
ANYWHERE  
IN HIS LIFE



SAVE THE  
MOMENTARY  
HAPPINESS OF  
DREAMS



THE  
=

THE

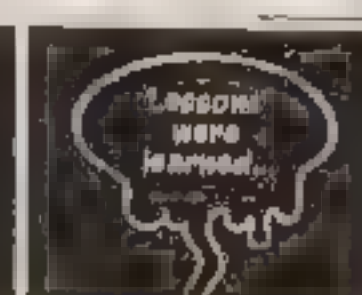
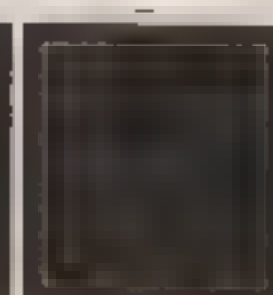
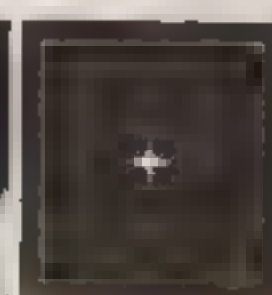
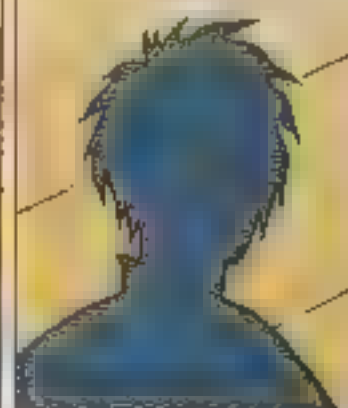


YES  
THE MONK  
WAS TO DIE  
AND HE  
DIED

THE  
FOX WHO  
TRIED TO  
HELP HIM  
FAILED TO  
HELP  
HIM

THE  
OHMYOJI  
LOST  
EVERY  
THING

WHAT  
GOOD  
DID I DO  
YOUR  
GRAND-ING  
HER  
WISH?





But the monk is not the raven, and the raven is not the monk. The monk is a man, and the raven is a bird. The monk is a man, and the raven is a bird. The monk is a man, and the raven is a bird.

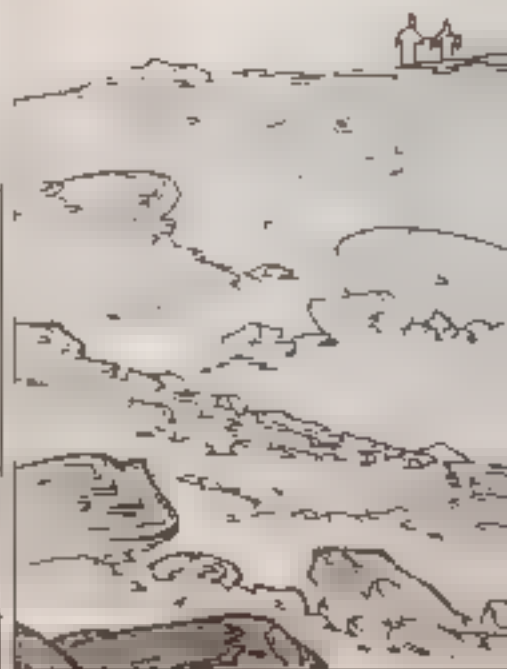


AND THAT IS THE TALE OF THE FOX AND THE MONK

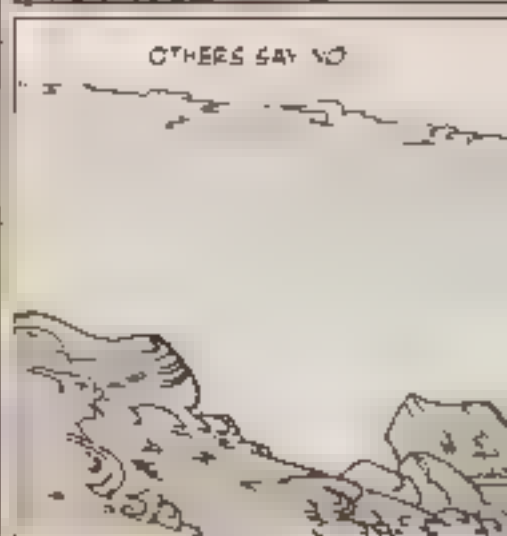
OR ALMOST ALL OF IT

FOR IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT THOSE WHO DREAM  
OF THE Distant REGIONS WHERE THE BAKU  
GRAZE HAVE SOMETIMES SEEN TWO FIGURES  
WALKING IN THE DISTANCE AND THAT THESE  
TWO FIGURES WERE A MONK AND A FOX

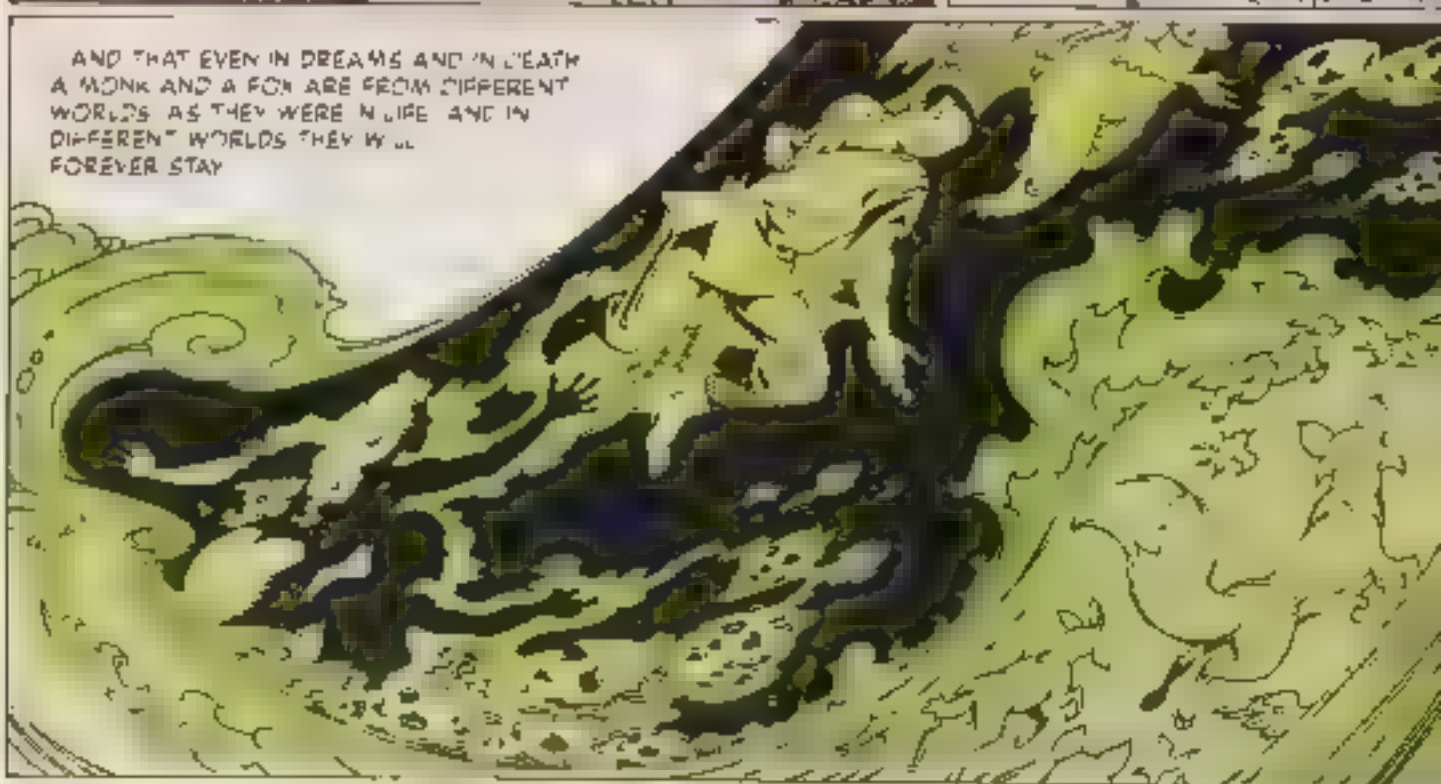
OR IT MIGHT BE  
A WOMAN AND A MAN



OTHERS SAY NO



AND THAT EVEN IN DREAMS AND IN DEATH  
A MONK AND A FOX ARE FROM DIFFERENT  
WORLDS AS THEY WERE IN LIFE AND IN  
DIFFERENT WORLDS THEY WILL  
FOREVER STAY





BUT DREAMS ARE STRANGE THINGS. AND NONE OF US BUT THE KING OF ALL NIGHT'S DREAMING CAN SAY IF THEY ARE TRUE OR NOT, NOR OF WHAT THEY ARE ABLE TO TELL ANY OF US ABOUT THE TIMES THAT ARE STILL TO COME





## AFTERWORD BY NEIL GAIMAN

**A**lthough I meant to do many things with *The Dream Hunters*, I did not intend to upset, baffle and confuse academics and book-overs. The book came about because, at the request of editor Jenny Lee, Yoshiyaka Amano made a poster for Sandman's tenth anniversary and I loved it. When VERTIGO supreme Karen Berger asked if I would like to write something new for the anniversary year I asked if I could work with Mr. Amano. He loved the idea, but requested that it be an illustrated book, not a comic.

I loved the idea, Mr. Amano, and his assistant Maki sent me reference materials on the time and the place I planned to set the story suggested I might want to include Baku, and I began to write, chapter by chapter and to send the story to Mr. Amano as each chapter was finished.

A call from Jenny Lee: it was thought that the book might be too short. Could I write something more?

I wrote an afterword, intended to fill several pages, giving a perfectly spurious account of the history of the story I had just written. I was not expected to be convincing. This was a *Sandman* story, after all: nobody would believe that Cain and Abel, or the Three Witches, or even the Dream Lord himself had been described in a Japanese story written hundreds of years ago.

Mr. Amano had drawn and painted *many* pictures as we had expected, and all but one of them were included in the book, leaving only one page for the afterword. We printed it in very small type and forgot about it.

Somewhere in there, I was on the phone to P. Craig Russell. Getting Craig on the phone is never easy: when he is on a long project he wakes and sleeps according to his own mysterious circadian rhythms, and is distant or not at all, depending on the project, which means you never know when to call, and you never know when not to call, and usually when you do call he's fast asleep, and when you do get hold of him you can't yourself lucky and ask for hours.

Craig asked what I was working on, and read him the first two chapters of *Dream Hunters*. "Oh," he said, "I want to do that as a comic. I can see it in my head." Craig loves adapting prose into comics. His opera comics and his Kipling and Wilde adaptations are remarkable and fine.

I told him that it would be a prose book, that Mr. Amano would be doing paintings for it and, a little wistfully, Craig agreed that he wasn't going to get to draw it as a comic.

Time passed. *Sandman: The Dream Hunters* was published and I earned hat if you put things in small type at the back of a book they are believed, unquestioningly, as the first of a stream of requests came in from people and from universities who found themselves unable to obtain the source texts I had claimed to have drawn from. I explained to each of them that I had made them up, and I apologized.

Sandman's twentieth anniversary approached. P. Craig Russell and I were working together on the comics adaptation of my novel *Caroline*. We were on the phone. "You know," said Craig, out of the blue, "I still want to adapt *The Dream Hunters*."

Ten years had passed. I pondered. Something that would not replace the Amano book but complement it, and a new Craig Russell *Sandman* comic, at that. "I don't know," said "I'll ask Karen."

I expected many things from Craig's *Dream Hunters*. What I did not expect was the strange feeling that came from reading a new *Sandman* comic. While I wrote *Sandman* for the better part of a decade, I never got to read it. And now I was. It was magical.

I hope you enjoy it as much as I did.

And I would like to apologize to anyone who has spent time trying to find the stories that *Sandman: The Dream Hunters* was based upon. They exist in Lucien's library, not in any of mine.

18 Sept 2008

Somewhere above the Pacific

Well, he had me fooled

For the past year when friends asked me what project I was working on, I would say I'm adapting Neil Gaiman's *The Dream Hunters*, an ancient Japanese fairy tale that Neil adapted from the original into the *Sandman* universe and very cleverly too, the way he wove Cain and Abel and the three witches into the fabric of his "retold" tale. A seamless transition, I said. It was only a few weeks ago I learned, along with practically everyone else, that Neil's story was entirely of his own invention, its faux pedigree a whimsical part of the whole.

This is a project he has felt charmed to me from the start. From the time I first read Neil's first rough draft of the story ten years ago, I knew immediately I wanted to make this story "mine." At that time he and I had only collaborated on two projects: *Sandman* #50 and his short story "One Life Furnished in Early Mootcock." I've spent much of my career doing adaptations of classic literature (Kipling, Oscar Wilde, etc.) and operas (*The Magic Flute*, *The Ring of the Nibelung*, *Salome*) but have always said, particularly on being given the original script to *Sandman* 50, that if I was offered scripts of this caliber every day I'd never need to do another adaptation. True, since Neil had already written *The Dream Hunters* as a short story, what I was doing was technically an adaptation, but it was an adaptation of a living writer. A different situation. A little more nerve-racking, though Neil has never been anything but an encouraging and enthusiastic partner. A Dream (such) to work with.

In its settings – an ancient and imaginary Japan complete with talking animals, demons and spirits both pleasant and malign amid natural settings that ranged from the loveliest

gardens to the wildest of supernatural hunderstorms. *The Dream Hunters* played to all my three major influences: Asian art (particularly Japanese woodblock prints), European Art Nouveau (especially the graphics of Alphonse Mucha), and reaching all the way back to my childhood, the lush imagery of the earliest Disney masterpieces. Though that may sound contradictory – "lush and lean" – it represents image-making that is at once visually rich, even profugate, in its settings and effects combined with animation's stringent demand that every line serve a purpose. Nothing wasted. That economy of line is the common denominator of all three of these influences and an important part of the visual heritage of cartooning for me, at least.

One of the happiest aspects of this experience, though, was the daily pleasure of receiving Lovern Kindziora's e-mailed JPEGs of the coloring. Early on, we decided to approximate the color palette of Japanese woodblock prints of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries: colorful, yet muted – using the frequently overexploited possibilities of computer coloring to produce effects no more extreme than those that might have been used on the original woodblock prints. As he has on every project we've collaborated on for the past seventeen years, Lovern's sensitive coloring has all the right notes.

It's been almost exactly one year since I began *The Dream Hunters*, and it's been one of the happiest experiences of my working life. And it seems somehow fitting, given the nature of *Sandman* / *Morpheus* / *Dream* that what I thought I was adapting, an authentic ancient Japanese fairy tale, was in fact an illusion entirely created by a modern western writer. So what have I been doing the past year?

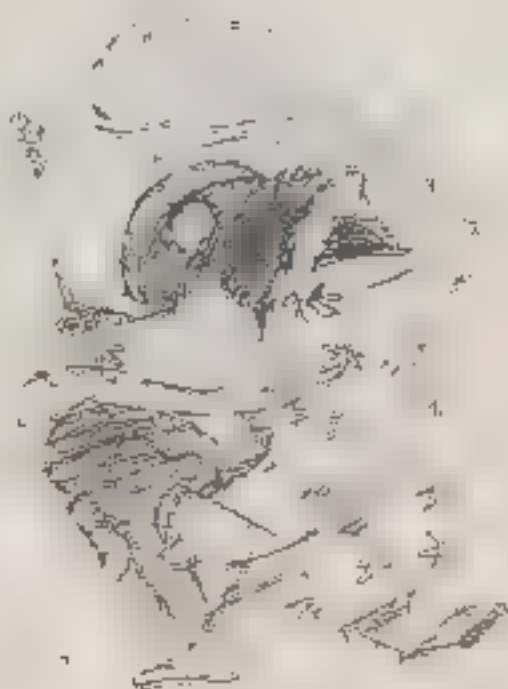
"Dream or reality – let others decide."

P. Craig Russell

# AFTERWORD BY KAREN BERGER



issue #1



From the time that Vertigo first started, we always prided ourselves on being creatively daring and unexpected in both story and art. And we've always made a pointed effort to really experiment with the covers, from the range of art styles and mediums, to overall concepts and designs to attracting talent from inside and outside the comics industry. With *The Sandman: The Dream Hunters*, we're proud to introduce the wonderfully gifted Yuko Shimizu.

An award-winning illustrator and fine artist, Yuko did a beautiful drawing of Neil to accompany an article he had written in *The New York Times* a couple of years ago, and after meeting her and seeing the wealth and beauty of her work, we knew that we were destined to work together someday. Our stars aligned on *The Dream Hunters*. Yuko's bold, yet lyrical art style fit perfectly with the

themes of the story, fusing an inimitable style of modern illustration and classical Japanese art into some unforgettable cover images.

This is only the first you'll be seeing of Yuko Shimizu at Vertigo. She's currently the cover artist for *The Unwritten*, a new monthly series that will forever change the boundaries between fiction and reality. And one of these days, we'll hopefully talk her into doing some interior work as well.

Yuko's covers for the original miniseries follow, accompanied by the variant covers by some of comics' greatest artists. And on this page, treat yourselves to Yuko's alternate sketches for each issue. Think of them as covers that could have been.







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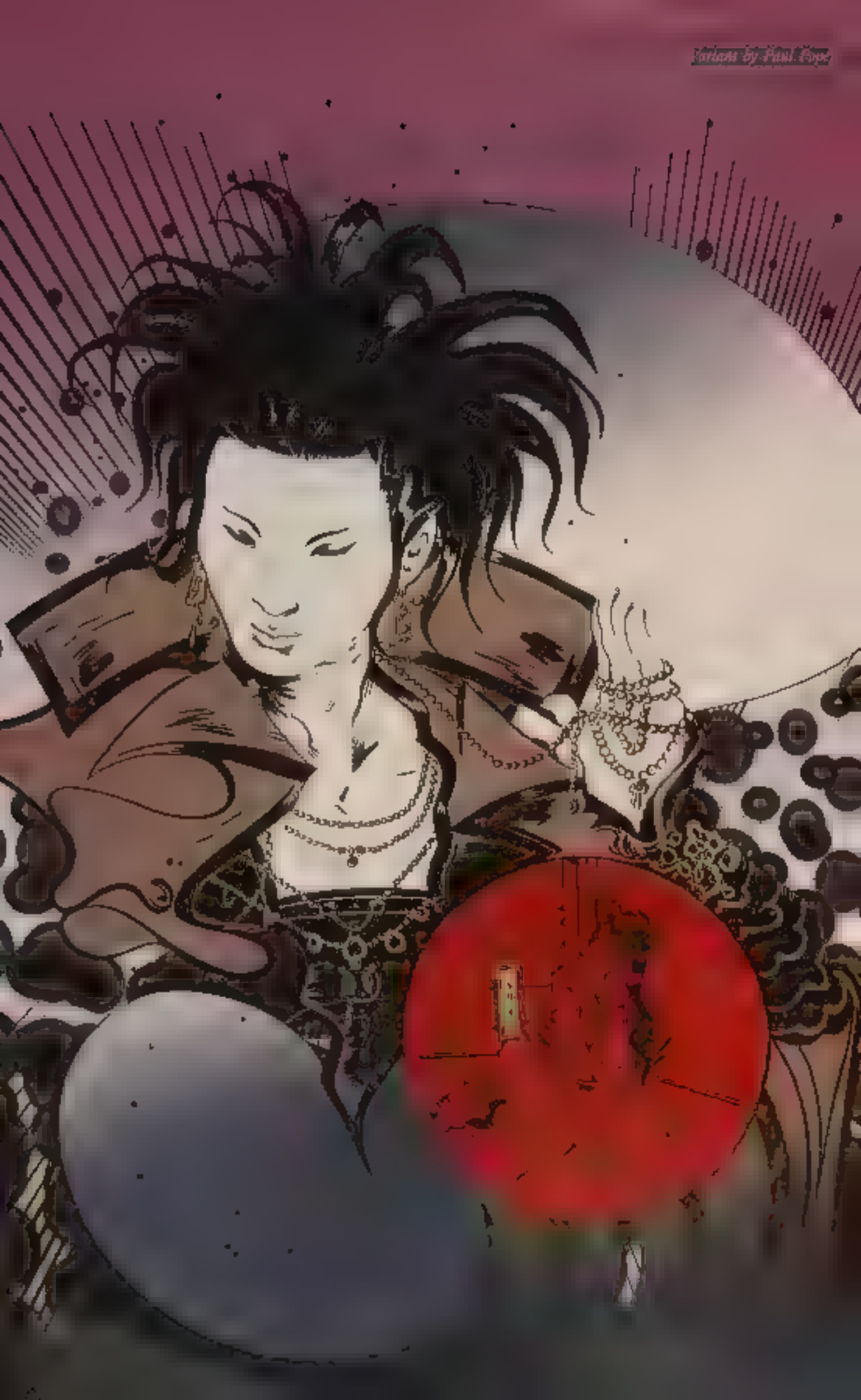




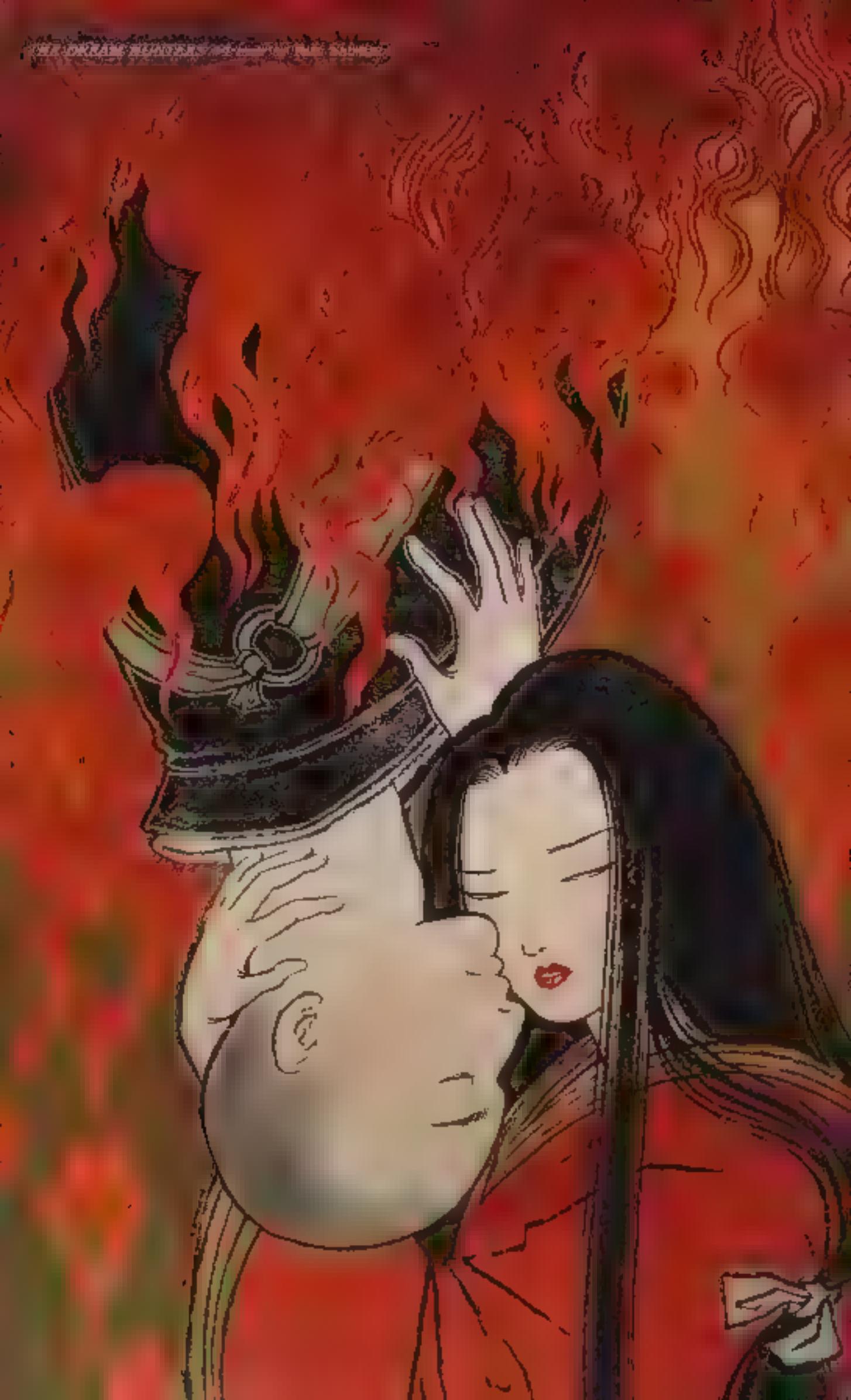












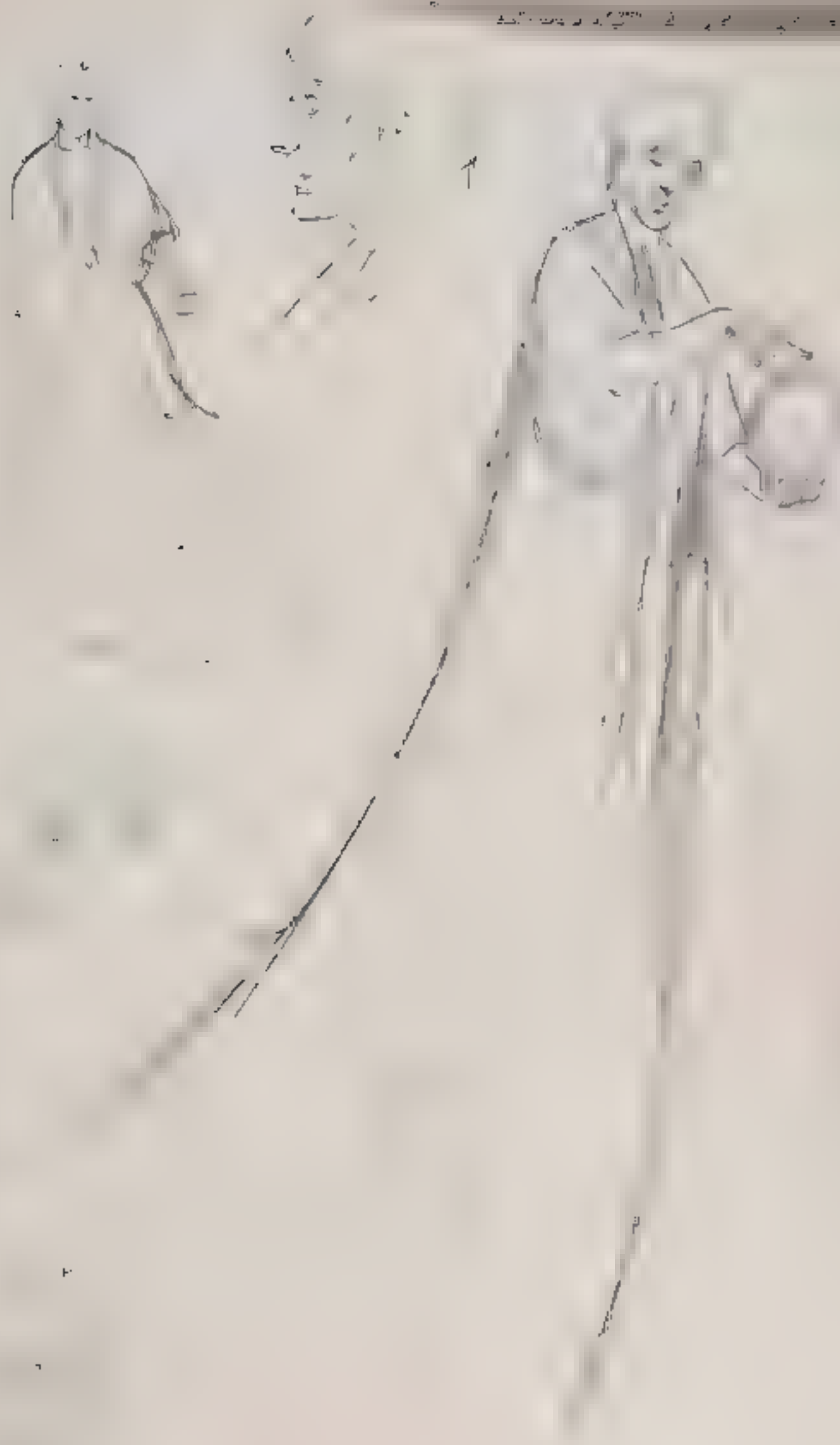














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NEIL GAIMAN is the *New York Times* best-selling author of the Newbery Medal-winning *The Graveyard Book* and *Coraline*, the basis for the hit movie. His other books include *Anansi Boys*, *Neverwhere*, *American Gods* and *Stardust* (winner of the American Library Association's Alex Award as one of 2000's top novels for young adults) and the short story collections *Mt. Dr. Magic* and *Smoke and Mirrors*. He is also the author of *The Wolves in the Walls* and *The Day I Traded My Dad for Two Goldfish* both written for children. Among his many awards are the Eisner, Hugo, Nebula, World Fantasy and the Bram Stoker. Originally from England, he now lives in the United States.

P. CRAIG RUSSELL lives in Kent, Ohio, and has been producing comic books, illustrations and graphic novels for 35 years. His work ranges from mainstream titles such as *BATMAN: Star Wars* and *Conan* to a series of adaptations of classic operas: *The Magic Flute*, *Salome*, *I Pagliacci*, *The Ring of the Nibelung*, a series of *Jungle Book* stories and an ongoing series adapting the complete fairy tales of Oscar Wilde. He has collaborated with Neil Gaiman on five projects, including *THE SANDMAN* #50 and *Coraline*.










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"*The Dream Hunters* is a lovingly-crafted piece of work. Russell produces...as faithful an adaptation as one could ever hope for."

—IGN

The world was different in old Japan. In those days, creatures of myth and legend walked upon the earth, swam in the sea, flew through the air. Some were kind and some were cruel. Some were wild and some, at great cost, could be tamed.

So it was that a wily fox made a wager to dislodge a humble young monk from his home—and lost her heart in the betting.

So it was also that a master of the demons of this world set his own eyes on the monk, seeking to seize the pious man's inner strength for his own.

And so it was, the King of All Night's Dreaming would find himself intervening on behalf of a love that was never meant to be...

Adapted by P. Craig Russell from the award-winning story by New York Times best-selling author Neil Gaiman. *THE SANDMAN: THE DREAM HUNTERS* is a richly evocative return to the world of *The Dreaming*, seen through entirely new eyes.



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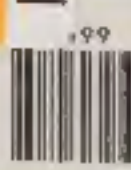
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